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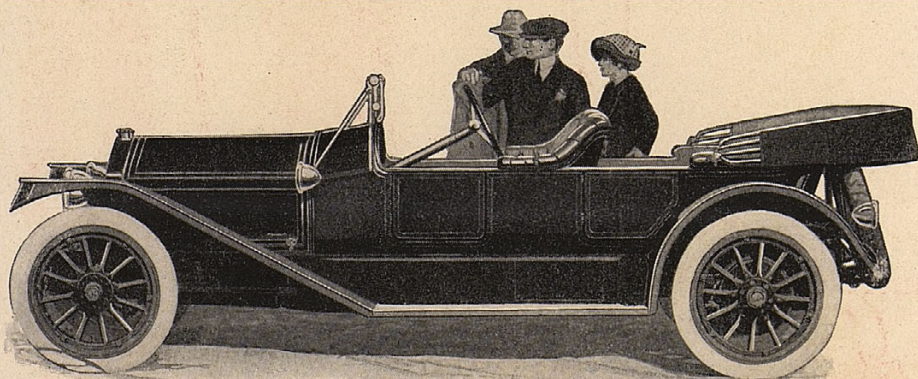
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Vol. XL

AUGUST, 1913

No. 4

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT, Editor

CONTENTS

THE INN OF YOUTH	Julius Grinnell Furthmann	1
THE MASTER MARINER	George Sterling	8
HER REPUTATION. Novelette	Beatrix Demarest Lloyd	9
THE SONG OF THE WHEAT	C. L. Marsh	50
"STRONG WOMEN"	Louise Closser Hale	51
HUMAN	Richard Burton	56
THE FELLOWSHIP OATH	Ernest Starr	57
HOME-COMING	Norreys Jephson O'Connor	66
PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT	Owen Hatteras	67
MISS FORTUNE	George Bronson-Howard	69
BREATH	Witter Bynner	82
LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM	Robert Garland	83
SATAN	Achmed Abdullah	88
THE AMERICAN: HIS LANGUAGE	H. L. Mencken	89
THE BARTENDER	Joyce Kilmer	96
THE GREAT CAROUSAL	Louis Untermeyer	97
JERRY	Barry Benefield	99
THE WINE PRESS	Theodore Lynch FitzSimons	108
FOODS THAT REMIND US	L. A. Browne	108
THE RETREAT	Robert W. Sneddon	109
WITHOUT INCONSTANCY	Harry Kemp	116
SEA LONGING	Sara Teasdale	116
MIRRORS	Robinson Jeffers	117
A FLIGHT	Edith Orr	119
THE CRICKETS	Henry Eastman Lower	125
FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LÉANDRE	Helen Woljeska	126
SERENADE	J. W. Wood	126
A HAND IN THE GAME	Robert Beale Davis	127
MADEMOISELLE PLATO. Play in One Act	Curtis Dunham	133
UN VOL. In the Original French	Michel Epy	141
L'AME DES CHOSÉS	Florian-Parmentier	143
WAIL OF A WAITRESS	Ethel M. Kelley	144
REVIEWING A REVIEWER	George Jean Nathan	145
A COUNTERBLAST TO BUNCOMBE	H. L. Mencken	153

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THE SEPTEMBER SMART SET

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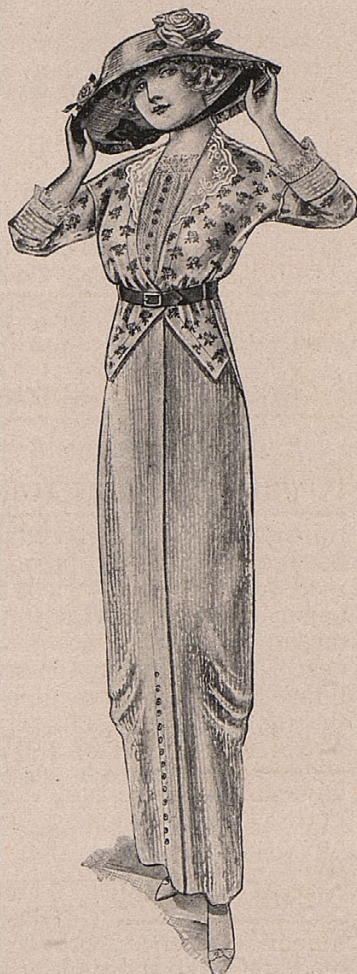
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THE SMART SET

The Magazine For Minds That Are Not Primitive

THE INN OF YOUTH

By Julius Grinnell Furthmann

THE big man suddenly threw back his head and shook out a great laugh—a vigorous echo of content. His wife, a quiet little figure in blue, laughed with him: a little, noiseless laugh. The children joined in, a bit timidly at first; then, as the merry infection ran around the supper table, a laughing, musical chorus arose, the clear, childish treble happily blending with the hearty barytone of the father.

“—And then, just as I expected,” he roared, “the jury got up and laughed the case out of court.”

And, led by his great laugh, the mirthful chorus pealed again.

It was just past supper time with the Brenners. There were five children, four boys and a girl. The father, August Brenner, was a lawyer; forty, and still of a prime, ruddy look. For him, apparently, this hour was one of glow and relaxation, and pleasant to consider amid the heat and welter of the busy days that came along with moderate success.

Presently Mara, the little daughter, twisted away from the clasp of his encircling arm and ran into the parlor, toward the piano.

“Play something, sweetheart,” Brenner called loudly; “you know my favorite.”

A blatant chord answered instantly, a pout in middle C, and the big man indulgently gave his great laugh. When Brenner laughed the corners of his eyes wrinkled upward, so that only the thinnest line of blue appeared through the hair-closed lids, and every converging furrow on brow and temple pleasantly contributed to the general contour of merriment—his heavy shoulders palpitating heartily the while. A robust cadence arose, stimulated and pumped by a prodigal display of energy; an instant his family appeared to pluck at and enjoy with broad pleasure. Laughter is elemental, full of character. As it was, the point flashed out as bright bait to the children, and they grabbed it eagerly, like a small school of voracious fish. They leaned back in their chairs, ecstatic, uproarious.

By and by the two younger boys, William and Charles, became slightly hysterical through a brave attempt to imitate Ernest, the second eldest, who set them a lusty example, being, indeed, a mild edition of his father.

“Ta-rá, ta-ru—”

In the parlor the piano tinkled readily under the little girl’s wavering touch, and Brenner, his chair pushed back from the supper table, began to mark time in the air with a raised forefinger. His deep voice boomed a measure now and

then, and he still sang: "Ta-ra, ta-ru—" when Edmund, the eldest boy, came into the room and made his way toward the table, his face widening a little with a vague, rather sheepish grin.

And, as in answer to a cue, the low-pitched small talk which circulated between the mother and children swiftly disintegrated into a series of cautious whispers, then hushed altogether, and they all turned, suddenly interested, absorbed, a bit furtive. The tinkle in the parlor presently discorded, and stopped. It suddenly became evident that Brenner was as well feared in his house as he was well loved—that he was given to strong moods, many of them extremes, as rotund and powerful in effect, perforce, as his great laugh.

Edmund slipped into his seat with downcast eyes. He was about fourteen. He possessed his mother's brown eyes and hair, and a smooth, round neck, upon which his head was set, balanced like an apple. Brenner twisted roughly around. He surveyed Edmund with a penetrating gaze that sharpened a trifle the more roundly to follow the shock of his opening thrust.

"Well, young man!" The boy was reaching out, awkwardly, for a plate his mother had filled. Their action, somehow, acquired a queer stricture. Her hand trembled perceptibly. Edmund looked at her with a new seriousness, thoroughly frightened, his eyes lighting with a bright appeal. Brenner only glared at them, and in a moment the woman glanced away from the quaking boy to the big man, her face going a little pale, uncertain. The boy looked down, trembling, and furtively withdrew his hand.

Brenner resumed on the instant, his voice lifting sharp and clear.

"You are late again. It's the third time this week! What do you mean by it, anyway?" He took a harsher note. "I made a rule that you should be home by five—" He fumbled with his watch. "Here it is seven o'clock."

Desperately, the boy still clung to his crumbling mount of silence.

"Why can't you mind me?" Brenner demanded sternly, leaning forward.

"Can't you see you're spoiling my supper for me?"

Edmund plucked at the white tablecloth. Before him the staring faces of the other children fast blurred into one white-cheeked, big-eyed mask. Brenner's clenched fist suddenly hit the table with an emphasis that made the silver rattle against the dishes. His eyes flashed ominously.

"Where have you been?" he roared.

The boy jumped violently; the others, too. His startled eyes bobbed up and down, then began piteously to swim in tears. Brenner drew a black scowl, but paused—the firm lines of his mouth hardening briefly.

His wife sighed and folded her hands. That, perhaps, was her most distinctive outline. Her hands were long and slim, and rather prettily fashioned, with delicate, tapering fingers. They were a little worn, but still very white. Apparently she shirked no household duty to save them. They looked like nervous hands, although now they did not wander about nor twist. She sat very still. She possessed, indeed, a rare method of silence, balanced perhaps with a faint air of indecision; combined with a wholly original fashion of catching the eye of a child, and smiling—gaily, lightly, sometimes sadly, always responsive, with a level, gracious trick of understanding—simply smiling. No wonder it was the children never were bored with her silences. A child's fears and questions and fancies swerve to dreams beside such a woman. The children loved the electric touch of her cool palms on their temples.

Brenner suddenly clapped the boy on the shoulder.

"Eddie," he insisted sharply, but with moderate emphasis, "I am waiting on you." Edmund stirred miserably. He had heard and understood his father perfectly; nevertheless, he lifted his wet face with that deliberate, vacant:

"Huh?"

It was spark to powder. The big man made no effort at control: his face blazed; he lunged forward and slapped the boy on the left cheek. The action consumed a swift snap of hand and elbow

—a stinging, lifting blow. Edmund's head flew back and he uttered an explosive cry.

The boy's pitiful whimper arose. His mother buried her face in her hands with a quick movement. Brenner burst out violently:

"Oh, you heard me! But you let it go in one ear and out the other—you— you tramp! Just like everything else I tell you. You seem to think I make rules in this house for nothing; that you can do just as you like. I can't make you mind me; you don't ever try to please me. All you think of is play, play, play. What in the world has got into you? Play makes you late for everything. Twice this week Charley lost money and list going to the store in your place. Tonight supper is over for an hour before you—before you make up your mind to come home—from play."

He paused, breathless. Brenner used swift, staggering speech—harsh and rich—got of his German, possibly: strong, heavy words that fell like sledge hammer blows. In the interval, Edmund's sobs dragged out, then blurred noisily once or twice, and grew fainter and fainter. His three brothers, meanwhile, sat facing him like three small lumps of apathy, all eyes. His little sister hung across her mother's lap, a quivering bundle of impersonal fear. Presently the woman stirred. Her hands smoothed out a vagrant wrinkle in the tablecloth. She spoke softly:

"He was out with the other boys—he wasn't thinking, August—"

"Oh, I don't care where he was!" Brenner flung at her. "He's got to mind me, that's all." Nevertheless he paused, glaring. A moment of perfect silence ensued. Fantastically, the clock in the parlor seemed to be ticking louder than ever.

Brenner still glared at the boy, striving to catch his eye, but Edmund persistently evaded him with a curious, forward tilt of his head, and he appeared to be watching the big man's hands, alertly, like a dog, ready to cringe away. All of a sudden Brenner threw back his head, and, half rising in his chair, struck the table with his heavy fist.

"Look at me!" he cried furiously.

A brief quiver of new apprehension seemed to leap around the little circle of chairs. Edmund slowly raised a wet face, grown sullen and bloated with weeping. Only the mouth sagged out of line, and, even as the big man watched, the uncertain lips deliberately curled with a bitter, resentful twist. Brenner stared; then, wildly, fiercely, he shouted:

"Take that look off your face!"

The boy recoiled, his face gray, full of hate.

Brenner drew up and stamped his feet impotently, then half rose in his chair. He sank back, trembling violently. His eyes seemed to catch fire and blaze up; in that moment, by some strange trick of passion, Brenner appeared to metamorphose, vainly twisting in the taut grip of a supreme, remorseless rage. He totally became, then, an animal, obsessed, madly insensible to will, unfettered, envenomed against self. He seemed to be passing through a veritable martyrdom of wrath. His face grew purple, then almost black; gutturals shook and broke, half-formed, in his distended throat.

"Ah-h!" he finally gasped, torturedly, and then, quick and passionate, he smote the boy a full-armed blow. The mad strength lifted the boy to his feet. He staggered weakly against the wall. He leaned there blubbering.

Brenner sprang clumsily from his chair. "Stop that crying!" he grated, and stood there, a rude bulk of a man, one fist resting on the table. Then, quite madly:

"Take that look off your face, I said!" The unnatural menace was unmistakable.

Edmund crouched down. Somehow, he appeared to sprawl out in an animal-like contour. His mother sat erect; a queer light flared into her paling face, flickering there, all as if her indecision were catching fire at last. The younger boys, terribly frightened, cowered nearby. Mara shrilly began to cry and wail from her mother's lap. Suddenly the woman pushed her down to the floor.

"August!" She beseeched him with hand and eye. "Won't you wait? Just

for a minute? Will nothing stop you?" In a normal moment, perhaps, Brenner would have understood what it cost her to speak. But now—

"Let me alone," he snarled. "You keep out of this—" Then he swung around on the boy, gritting his teeth. "I'll teach you to mind—I'll learn you a rule or two, Mister Big Eyes!" he belowered savagely, and raised his arm, measuredly, like a pugilist.

Edmund hugged the wall, half turned, in a pitiful, rigid pose—and the blow fell—but it was the woman who reeled away, stunned silent, one hand catching impotently at the wainscoting.

Recoiled in full swing, Brenner saw it all in a flash, and instantly fell sober. He ran toward the stricken woman, frantically displaying open, pleading hands. "Sarah!" he moaned. "My God, Sarah, I didn't go to do it—I didn't go to do it, like that!" and stopped at her side, a disconnected, incoherent stream of passionate sounds pouring from his lips as running water leaps from a wheel.

The woman shivered once, hard, then slowly faced him. First he saw a hideous splotch mantling her left cheek—a vivid splash of color that ebbed and flowed. Then he gave a great, inarticulate cry. At her right side she gripped the long-bladed carving knife.

She had snatched it up from the table as she sprang between her son and the descending blow.

Brenner shrank back a step. Her indecision was gone—burned out. What remained in her eyes was indefinable. To Brenner, her attitude reeked of kindling purpose.

"Sarah!" he cried at last. "What do you mean?" Something of emotion, distress, bewilderment, possibly, moved in his voice. He put out a credulous hand. "Sarah!"

Immediately she discovered a voice, even and cold.

"Be careful," she said, gesturing rather unconsciously with the knife; "it is very sharp." She might have ground her heel in his face with marvelously less effect. The big man stared at her like a man caught up amid a fantastic dream.

Everything seemed to be slipping away from him.

For an instant she stared, too. Then, as if recalling her original purpose, she turned quickly to the boy. "Here," she ordered, briskly—"take this—" and she placed the long blade in his reluctant, nerveless hand. She stepped back, and stood very straight, her eyes flashing, and something magnificent went into her voice and gesture as she challenged the big, motionless man. "Now!" she cried loudly. "Now! Strike him now—" her voice breaking under a heavy burden of wild defiance.

Brenner only looked on dazedly.

All at once Edmund slid down against the wall and gave way to a coughing paroxysm of hysterical sobs and childish incoherence. The carving knife fell unheeded, clattering on the floor. All eyes rested on Brenner.

"This is terrible," the big man muttered; "this is terrible—" With a tortured gasp he caught at his chair for support. The woman watched silently, a curious light stirring in her eyes. He was shaking before her. His expression changed, too; a futile wonder, a faint regret even, marked it.

And the great shiver that mightily ran up and over his big frame ended dismally in a feeble twist of the heavy shoulders.

"Sarah—" he moaned. "Sarah—" Then a hoarse, rumbling monotone rose and fell. "How could you do me that way? How could you shame me so?" At last his voice trailed off querulously with: "Before the children, too!"

The children began to move about on the floor, knocking against one another. They peered curiously over the table edge. Brenner vaguely waved his hand, as if he felt the callous thought that moved them all.

Their fear of him was slipping past.

"—And armed the boy against his father," he rambled again in a suffering tone, and suddenly the thought shocked him hot and cold. He dropped into his chair with a heavy crash, and looked wildly around—at the stricken circle of chairs, at the tense figure of his wife, at the stony faces of his children.

Yes, it all appeared horribly unreal.

Brenner suddenly tossed his head and essayed that great laugh. The woman quietly walked across the intervening floor and sat down just as he began. Her eyes still gave him curious study. A shaky peal lifted for an instant, then broke crazily. Wrath is elemental, too. The next ten seconds dragged slowly as minutes—meanwhile the room remained soundless enough for a grave. Brenner only sat there, his head in his hands. Presently his eyes gleamed a little, and as quickly dulled—then gleamed again. He drew himself erect at the table, recalescing, and shook his finger at the staring, dreamful woman, whose eyes were neither bright nor dull. He stirred mildly in his chair, as if he were ashamed of his previous display of feeling, as if he felt that a slur had been cast on his manhood.

"You have gone the limit," he said in a medium voice. "You gave the boy a weapon to use on me. You gave a knife to a child, mind you—"

"Only if you struck him again," the woman broke in. "You were going to—"

"Never mind that!" Brenner gestured impatiently, with lame vigor, if such were possible. "Ain't I his father? Damn it, ain't I? He disobeyed me; I can do as I please. Why should you interfere? I only gave him all he deserved."

"I know. But, August, you lost your temper. You kind of looked like a—like a—" Now she faltered miserably.

Brenner, possessed and deliberate, baited her with a wry smile.

"Go on," he urged. "Go on. Say it."

"You might have killed him."

Brenner began a mirthless chuckle.

"That's good. I might have killed him, eh? I lost my temper, I did—" He shook with uncanny mirth. Then he subsided suddenly. "Say, did I pick up the carving knife?" he roared.

What he said smote home with the physical effect of a blow, yet the woman faced him splendidly, her head high, eyes bright.

"No! You struck me instead—me, who gave you five children! Funny,

isn't it? You struck me, and you were crazy when you did it. Then you ask me how I can shame you so—" Brenner winced furiously under her ironic mimicry. Surprise showed in his face, however, when she began all of a sudden to tremble weakly and twist her hands. "Oh, August, you have no control when you are angry—nor feeling. You get so mad you can't see straight—" Her voice broke badly. The children, one by one, got up and stood around her, like a bodyguard of a king. Then the little girl grabbed at her skirt, and the four boys glared defiance over her shoulder.

She went on after a moment.

"But let that go. I don't want to blame you—I don't hold it by you. I know the boy disobeyed you. A child must be punished sometimes—I realize that. I have seen you do it before—only—oh, this time he looked at me differently. He looked at me like the whole heart of him was in his eyes—and then I looked at you, August—I just couldn't help myself—I ran in to—to—"

Brenner whipped in: "To give him the carving knife!" He seemed to think of little else. "Didn't you?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" she flashed back. "To give him his chance—his chance with you. August, you know you strike too hard," and she touched her left cheek.

He scarcely noticed her.

"Well," he replied, "I shall never strike him again." Suddenly his face loomed cold and pitiless. "This is the end—I'm through. I am, so help me! I guess you'll understand me now, eh? I can divorce you for that business with the knife—"

An involuntary gasp burst from the woman, and he paused, as if fully to relish her agony. She put her hands to her face—hers was the exquisite misery in that moment.

"Divorce? August, August—the children—" That was all she could say. Brenner wagged his head with grim finality.

"So it hurts, eh?" A ghost of his great laugh strangled him for the moment. "Yes, the children—they have always been yours—they never—they

never were mine! I never had a decent chance with them. A lot you thought about the children when you snatched up that—that—" For once he could not use the word. "A lot you thought of me. It's the finest thing in the world for a man to be coming home to—I'm through, I tell you," and then, with a deliberate twist, he added: "The children can be witnesses if you like." Then again, quite bitterly: "Your story won't sound any worse than mine—in court." He watched her in the next ten seconds with a faint, impersonal curiosity, as he might have watched a witness, who, in the course of a merciless cross-examination, had been wrung to the point of a complete breakdown.

She did not answer at once; she bent over and gently released the tight hold of the little daughter on her skirt. This action, somehow, consumed more time than one would think, and Brenner angrily regarded her the while, as if the brief delay named a distinct reproach. When she faced him again her eyes were steady and bright, yet reflected light dully.

"Do as you like," she said slowly. "It's all one to me." And, with a gesture of vague, unconscious disgust, which in some way seemed clearly to illustrate her new attitude toward him, she rose, attaining, by the same token, a new, proud height for her slight figure. For the deferential instant that ensued thus, husband and wife looked at each other as if to say:

"She's glad of it."

"My life is smashed."

A sullen moment or two, and then she straightly passed the big man and continued slowly out of the room, leaving a subtly challenged silence behind; for, instantly she was gone, Brenner attempted a wide appeal to the children through Mara, his little daughter.

"No, no!" she cried, shrewishly, even as he raised his arms to her. "No! No!" And broke into loud cries.

With a hoarse grunt of disappointment and mortification, the father rushed into the parlor and out into the hall, where he saw his wife on the stairs, going toward her room.

On the landing she half turned, looking back. Brenner was throwing himself into his coat. Her face, as she paused there, had relaxed a little, and appeared to have taken on a look at once tragic and sad. She saw Brenner hesitate before the little mirror in the hatrack. As it was, he cast a swift glance at his reflection and bared his teeth. He perceived a tense, heavy-jowled face, all unfamiliar, grinning back at him, grim and blackly beset, all eyes, nose and mouth and chin. The black floridity fascinated him marvelously. It was as if he saw there a secret deep of his soul, mirrored and bound in glass, as if this liability of character never would have been acknowledged otherwise.

An open pause, and the door slammed at his back.

On the sidewalk Brenner threw back his head and avidly drank in great draughts of fresh air. Each deep breath appeared to refresh him like a flagon. From the parlor window the children anxiously watched him lunge out in swift strides toward the corner; under the dim light of the sidewalk lamp he swung about and disappeared in the flooding darkness beyond. They sat in the window seat and talked in whispers until they heard their mother calling them to come to bed.

In a half-hour the woman came downstairs. She wandered aimlessly through the house for a while, setting odds and ends to rights with her absent, mechanical touch. She looked listless and worn. In the dining room she picked up the carving knife, the bright length of blade holding her eyes for an instant, then she threw it in a sideboard drawer, and began to clear away the supper table. She busied herself in the kitchen. First, she emptied the nigh-overflowing drip pan from beneath the icebox. Loose slices of bread were wrapped in a dampened towel and put away in the battered old tin on the pantry shelf. She washed the supper dishes next. A bright energy smote up through every movement. Once a homely croon escaped her lips, a tuneless old thing her mother (and her mother before her, pos-

sibly) had hummed in a bygone day. She swept the rough pine floor with a stiff broom, and cast rather intentful eyes on the faded, tousled head of the pudgy mop hanging behind the stove. When she left the kitchen it was spick and clean. She appeared reluctant, too. In the dining room she paused long enough to count the silver and put it away in a sideboard drawer with the family napkins. That done, she went in the parlor and, weary to the bone, dropped into an old rocking chair near the half-opened window. She found herself on the brink of things.

The woman sat there a long time. Out of doors, multitudinous sounds, hesitating and vague, floated up through a vast quiet, a marvelous abyss of silence mightily filled with tiny noises, a volleying calm. Occasionally a stealthy movement, sinuous as thought, writhed over the trees, creaking and sighing in the swaying branches, shaping the shadowy pinions and mystic shawls into fantastic forms, dreamful and cruel. She watched with conservative interest an ancient game a lithe shadow and vagrant beam of lamplight played to and fro in the middle of the street. But she tired of the everlasting crisis. A murmur arose in the night, distinct, wistful and sad, sighing mildly from the trees, as if the great cottonwoods yearned to bend and moan before a big wind, as if their sinewy girths invited timidly the rude clasp of a burly lover. At last all sounds flowed gently on. The woman dimly wondered where. Presently a queer trick of thought slid upon her, and she imagined they had hesitated, and called her from beyond, faintly, from afar, like waking dreams, and then she dozed off into a twilight of sleep.

Brenner returned late. He swung up the walk with a brisk, alert air, and entered the house noiselessly, without hesitation. All was dark except dim gaslights in the hall and parlor. He removed his hat and coat, once glancing in the mirror as he moved before the hatrack. He looked radiantly well. His face flared ruddy and bright with a

rose flush got only of vigorous walking. His eyes were clarified of their old red murk and glowed with a flash of wholesome fire. The whites were clear as china.

Presently he came to himself beside the sleeping woman, looking down at her. She was very quiet and still. Her cheeks had fallen slightly, her lips were partly open, and on her face sat a fixed look—the absorbed, contemplating expression of the unconscious. Sleep is elemental, rich with awe. Brenner stirred a little and did reverence, staring down at the hushed figure with a new wonder, dreaming new thoughts: a fascination that left him puzzled and sad. He gazed on, marveling that she remained so quiet and still, when directly a something gripped tight and strong within him, rolled over and around, fumbling in his breast, like a newly awakened child, clawing at his heart with curious, pawing fingers. He put out his big hands, galvanically moved, and shook the woman roughly, crying in a loud voice:

“Sarah!” And again, tenderly, soothingly: “Sarah—Sarah.”

By and by the man pointed out into the night. At the far end of the dim street a dust cloud rose and came on. Before them lay a deep hush; then a vast whisper pierced it, and the window frames rumbled their protest. Soon a great wind cheered in the trees. His wife nestled close. Presently the soft alliteration of the rain came to them out of a lather of confusion. She spoke softly.

“August, hadn’t we better close the windows?”

Brenner’s great laugh roared above the tumult of rain and wind. She laughed, too—a little, noiseless echo of happiness. They stood up together; he gave her a loud, resounding kiss, caught at her hand, and they raced at the stairs like two children, with an autumn storm breaking behind them.

Neither gave a thought to the boy. What did it matter? A child meets Youth and his father on the same road.

THE MASTER MARINER

By George Sterling

MY grandsire sailed three years from home,
And slew unmoved the sounding whale:
Here on a windless beach I roam
And watch far out the hardy sail.

The lions of the surf that cry
Upon this lion-colored shore
On reefs of midnight met his eye:
He knew their fangs as I their roar.

My grandsire sailed uncharted seas,
And toll of all their leagues he took:
I scan the shallow bays at ease,
And tell their colors in a book.

The anchor chains his music made
And wind in shrouds and running gear:
The thrush at dawn beguiles my glade,
And once, 'tis said, I woke to hear.

My grandsire in his ample fist
The long harpoon upheld to men:
Behold obedient to my wrist
A gray gull's feather for my pen!

Upon my grandsire's leathern cheek
Five zones their bitter bronze had set:
Some day their hazards I will seek,
I promise me at times. Not yet.

I think my grandsire now would turn
A mild but speculative eye
On me, my pen and its concern,
Then gaze again to sea—and sigh.



TACT—The art of lying without being found out.

HER REPUTATION

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

SHE sat in her *chaise-longue* watching him, as he stood with his face window-ward and his staunch figure presented to her in an apparently noncommittal attitude. But she read a great deal into his attitude. He was not angry at her, but troubled in spirit, as a simple man ever is by the seeming complexity of a woman.

He was staring outward, unseeingly, and fumbling his cigarette. "It's like this, Beth," he said. "I don't know whether I can make you understand, for I confess that what seems clear to you is all muddle to me. You didn't put me on any silly probation. But I had to make good before we could be married. I wanted that as much as you—more!"

He turned, a flash of adoration in his face. But she wanted him to keep to the point, and did not meet the glance. It would have meant the inevitable interruption. And she, who had prepared herself for this small battle, wanted it "over with."

"We've been through—in the last five years—a peculiar circle of hell that Dante is not modern enough to have described. The inferno of working and waiting—working as an actor must work and waiting as a lover must wait—" He broke off again. "And you—waiting. And you working." His eyes sought the window again. "You've been a brick, Beth," he said.

"Bricks without straw, Junior!" No, it had not been easy.

He laid his cigarette down, pressing its fire out in the brass tray slowly. "Five years," he said. "It's a long time. But—this is what I cannot understand: The five years are over!"

His head went up as he faced her. "I have made good. You know I have. We've tried out successfully and booked for a long run here in New York. I don't mean to take the credit—that you know. Thank God, being the star of this company doesn't mean being the only actor in the cast. Never mind—I am at the place I set myself to attain. But you, Beth—what is this change in you? I thought—"

She turned in her chair until her chin rested in the palm of her hand. "You know you don't mean that there is any change in me," she said.

"Change in your plan, then." He spoke half impatiently.

"Junior dear," said she slowly, "you've done awfully well. You *have* made good. But I wanted the career for you, not the career as a guarantee! It wasn't that I wouldn't marry you if you were a general utility man in a road company in Texas. It was for you, not for myself."

He looked down at her, too absorbed by his bewilderment to voice the love that quickened in him at the thought of all she had helped him to achieve.

"It wasn't because I didn't love you, was it, Junior, that made me endure these five years, helping you when I wasn't working myself? I haven't learned your scenes and rehearsed them with you because I didn't want to marry you!" Her smile was half motherly, half loverlike, as she looked up at him, but he did not smile.

"I know that, Beth. I know that. But now? Now?" he repeated.

She was silent a moment. It wasn't an easy thing to say to a simple man. "Now, my dear," she said slowly,

"you've got to make your new position secure. You can't consider New York your own, because you have made a dog record, and are beginning a long engagement on Broadway. You are beginning. This season will make you well known—you'll be established. No one can pull you down."

"Pull me down!" he repeated, and his look of bewilderment did not pass from his face. "Beth," he said, after a pause, "don't you believe in me yet? Don't you trust me?"

It had to come in plain terms, she saw that. "I trust you. There is no question about that. I believe in you. I know you are going to be—oh, not a great actor, but one that will win an enviable place. It's—it's North I don't trust," she said quickly.

"North!" he said. He was puzzled but he laughed. "Why, North—he's backing me for all he's worth. Why should he—he'd be jolly well out of pocket—"

"He could replace you now. He couldn't next year—oh, believe me, Junior, I know what I'm talking about!"

"I wish I did!" the man rapped out. "Why on earth should you fancy North would give me the sack? He's not concerned in whom I marry."

She got up suddenly and put her two hands on his shoulders, looking him full in the eyes. "But he is," she said.

He looked blankly at her and she felt a sudden desire to shake him, as she closed her long white hands on his arms. But she laughed a little and let him go. "Dear stupid!" she said, and wondered how a woman pure of heart could play a part to the man she loved. "North is—at present—very much infatuated with your humble servant."

There was no answering lightness in his look or tone. He stared at her as she moved a little away. There was no incredulity in his face. Indeed, as she stood there in her long straight draperies, her unusual beauty startling the very air about her, a man could easily believe what she had said. But Dohan Junior was of the stuff that may have complexity thrust upon simplicity, but never by fortune or fate has complexity

borne in. He turned, as she turned, and looked at her.

For a woman who has foreseen a crisis and made herself equal to it, she felt distressingly unprepared. She had nothing to hide and nothing to gloss, but the fact remained that she was dealing with a simple man, and there is no more difficult antagonist on earth for a clever, subtle woman—when she loves him.

He, on his part, was chilled to the marrow. He could have let his teeth chatter had not his jaws been set in his effort to keep his mind clear. He was primitive and direct, and at a loss in the altitude that rang with a light laugh over the idea of love. He was frankly impossible in a situation that called for wily tact. But that was one of the many things the perverse feminine in her loved in him.

He let the silence grow till it cast its shade over her, but it was not intentional. He was groping, trying to understand. The result came, as she knew it would, in the form of a direct question.

"You mean that Hermann North is in love with you?"

"I mean just that," she answered in a level tone. "And"—she faced him again imperiously—"I mean nothing more than that!"

He stood heavily, never taking his eyes from her face. And she, perhaps from sheer nervous relief at having that much over with, perhaps because his immobility chafed her to greater unrest, took up the lagging thread and wove it into the tapestry of what was best for him.

"I know all the things that are going through your mind. Like all other men, you are sure that a man would never set his heart upon a woman unless he had been encouraged to hope and believe. There is not a man living who does not know that is balderdash, or any woman, either. You are wondering if I have been alluringly kind to him. I haven't. The last time he was here I told him to go, that it was impossible."

She was startled to see the knots whiten in his hanging hands, and hurried on.

"He has never been importunate or—or crude. I don't mean that. But I was a pleasant hostess—as long as I could be. Then, when he became rather too sincere, I asked him to go. Well—he went. That has nothing to do with the case. He will get over it—he has a wife and a home and children. He's all right. But if—just at the moment when he fancied himself absorbed in my affairs—we should calmly get married, the old love of revenge would rise in him, and your advent on Broadway would be marked with a black cross instead of with an electric light. I know whereof I speak. I was—almost born among these people." She paused and a sudden vehemence struck into her tone. "I haven't done my five years for nothing, Junior. In six months it will be plain sailing. You don't understand the lot of gossamer threads that we women have to spin. They are spur of nothing, but they are a tangle when they are swept aside. North is the god in the car, at this juncture. We have worked these five years to get you where you are. And in an hour we can pull our building down around our ears. But what folly—what folly!"

He continued to stare at her, and she, who had the most straightforward eyes in the world, gave look for look.

"It has been a part of my life of which you knew nothing. I never meant to tell you, but you shall have the whole of it. I thought I could help you to this gift without your ever knowing. If I can't—and I can't with you asking for the telling of it—here it is. There has not a day gone by that I have not—not been a brick but—carried bricks. I have spread mortar and set the stones of the foundation. I have made friends for you. I have put in a word for you; I have effaced myself for you. And I have done it so well that no one ever guessed. You yourself had no idea." A fleeting smile crossed her face at the thought that she was flattering him, Dohan Junior, without premeditation. He would never have guessed. "I didn't want you to know because I was afraid I might have to reckon with that silly pride of yours, and I knew you

would want to come to me and say—as you have said today—'I have made good.' You are too fair a man to think that in this moment I am trying to belittle what you have done. I couldn't do it, but I have helped you. It was only that I had helped you that I wanted you never to know."

She came to a little pause, because her voice was not of itself as calm as she made it. A little gesture preceded her next words.

"You are waiting to hear about North! I saw long ago that he was interested in me. And I made up my mind then that I would use him. You'll think me destitute of fair dealing; but North—really, Junior, one can't but feel that the balance is still heavily weighted on his side. He has made what he wished of so many of us. Well—he didn't even know you then. What was it you said—he is backing you for all he is worth! You don't suppose a manager like North is going about hunting for lost genius and staking a fortune on the chance. I led him around by the hand till he discovered you. I ran you down. I let him persuade me. I acknowledged that he had been right, and quoted to him things he had said about you that he had never even guessed. And finally we arrived where we are. I merely led him up to the curtain to see you. But I *did* do that."

For the first time, she moved, and walked away from him. "Now the prize is within your hands, only waiting for your fingers to close on it. He can take it away from you. He can get another man for your part. And where would you be then? Trying to explain to some other manager that a personal matter had been the ruin of your first New York season. He wouldn't believe you—I wouldn't. You'd be a dead loss."

She turned swiftly and came back to him. "And, after all, what is it?" she said. "A handful of months added to a time already past. We are both young, and we can during these months be in the same city together and see one another every day. And every day that passes over the two of us will be nearer

the day that shall pass over 'one.' Dear heart," she said, her hands stealing up about his neck, "don't spoil what I have worked so long to accomplish. North is angry with me now because of my recent rebuff. If he can connect you with it—he will make me suffer through you. If our marriage, or even our engagement, comes out now, he will do the obvious thing. I know him well."

His hands came down over her arms and back again to hold her fingers. "I don't believe I understand," he said. "You can't ask me to stand aside while you pettifog North to advance me." His voice dragged over the words as if he only half knew what he was saying.

She took a long breath. "I don't know what it is," she said slowly. "Perhaps men and women go about things in different ways. It may be that women have too many centuries of under dog down in their veins, or it may be that they have too many instincts of their power. I don't know which. I am honest and straightforward—I know that. I am that with myself, and many men cannot say as much. But I understand the crisis at which we stand. We can make an enemy of North and he can crush you utterly." She lifted her eyes to his, and he could but wonder at the light in them. "I have made an enemy of him," she said proudly, "and he can do as he likes with me. I know him. He will pull a wire, and a little marionette, called Elizabeth Arnold, will no more be seen in the Punch and Judy show. But why should he pull your wire, too?" She leaned nearer to him. "I have lost what was mine—do you understand? I told him to go. No"—answering a sudden hurtful pressure of his fingers—"he was not—like that. But his talk verged on a—what one might call—a declaration." She was detached enough, being feminine, to smile at the word. "I did not wait for him to commit himself. I—I put him out in a friendly and cordial way. I have done with Elizabeth Arnold. But I have not 'done' with Dohan Junior."

She turned her fingers in his until they interlaced. "At this moment he is wondering what he can do. He knows that

he can't hurt me. He knows I can take my theater trunks and my rougepot and send them to the bottom of Hell Gate, and go home and ride a pony. No—he wants now to hurt me, and if we went out this afternoon, as you suggest, and were married, I should have given him his cue. He would fall down on you. And it isn't fair, Junior—it isn't fair that all I have done should go for nothing!"

She was so sure of what she was saying that she felt she had conquered him. But he caught her suddenly in his arms, and she saw his face bending above her, scarlet, strange. "It's *you* who do not understand," he said. "I love you! I love you!" He held her so closely that her heart seemed to bruise itself as it beat. He trembled as he stood, and a vague fear possessed her that she had not gauged her weapons. She looked upward and saw that the red had ebbed, leaving his face white and lined. His eyes faced hers, and terrified her. She felt a quick desire to hide her face. She was conscious of an impulse to give up and throw herself upon his unaided fortune. She had a moment's rebellion and a moment's fierce pride, and she knew that he was too simple a man to understand anything but his own necessity.

He drew her closer, and the warmth of his body kindled her own.

"Beth—" he said. She trembled. It seemed to her that she was awaiting her death sentence. "Beth," said Dohan Junior, "I am not clever, nor wise. But this I do know: Not until you are ready, willing to leave the playing of politics, not until you are glad to follow me out into the world, friendless, homeless, not until you are willing to go with me into the woods, a beggar—not until then do you love me."

He held her a moment, watched her hand as it caught at the edge of the table, and with a sudden unexpectedness, released her, snatched up his hat and gloves and was gone.

II

SHE sank back into her chair, tremulous, half tearful, half smiling. All the

girlhood in her, and there was much, trembled with the aftermath of his nearness, his passionate, angry words, his love that was not his because it was half hers; all the woman in her, and there was much, too, mothered him and shook a wise head.

For she was quite sure she knew what was best for him. She had told him the truth, but not half the truth, when she had pled for the structure of her long, hard, sacrificial labor that he would boyishly sweep aside to take her in his arms. She had determined—the mother in her—to help him to the career that she knew him capable to wield if not to achieve alone. And she was still determined, though it cost her these added months of waiting, though it chilled her with temporizings and lies.

For she had not told him the truth, not all the truth, about North. She had forestalled the equivocal expression of that long-suffered love for her, which she had recognized long since and valiantly evaded. She had gained a few hours. She had sent him away. But she had lied when she said he would not come back.

He would. He had not gone away angry. The scene she sketched to Dohan Junior was not historically correct, but the balm she laid upon the ache that would not be denied in the heart that never wished to lie to him was that prophetically it had been truthful. North would come back, and then—He would not be “importunate—or crude”—she could manage that! After all, he was enough in love with her to be afraid of her. And she would send him away again, this time forever, and then the little marionette called Elizabeth Arnold would be taken down—or not, as the show master pleased. But at least Dohan Junior would not go, too.

The whole situation lay upon her as a shadow from which she hoped soon to pass into the light. It brought a nervous tension into her hands that closed to small gripped fists, as she thought that she must endure the declaration that would come. Lax as the changeful atmosphere was she had perforce dwelt in, it had never slacked the straightly

drawn enclosure where she kept her womanhood. North was married, and had nothing to offer her but love—unbounded love, she thought with a sorry shudder. There was more than one meaning in the phrase, and she was too clean and clear of vision not to know that bounds and bonds are the very exquisite outlines of love that make its beauty perfect.

Not for herself, for any fame or gain, would she have “pettifogged North” for advancement. She may or may not have said this to herself, but it was true. She loathed the situation that enfolded her as she would have writhed in foul rags. But it was the logical outcome of the influence she had set herself to exercise over the man, and she justified it to the woman part of her, though the girlhood would have none of it. She could be a fanatic torn by lions for her outspokening—for herself. For the boy she loved, she could be a Jesuit.

She loved him the better, if better she could, for his blind, mad rejection of her plea. He was quite right—the girl in her avowed it. Better a log cabin in the woods alone with perfect openness. It was only the woman of her, that seemed so maternally older than he, that wove a charm of measured paces and waving hands, that would stoop to trickery to win him what she had set her heart upon his achieving. Because she had two sides, she loved him the better for having only one. And even while she was arrogant in her knowledge that she could handle the crisis skillfully, she was conscious of a hurtful wonder in her heart if he would love her less for her dual prescience.

North came sooner than she had thought he would. The flush had barely faded from her cheeks, the glow had hardly departed from her heart, when she found herself called upon to render into fact the prophecy she had rehearsed to Dohan Junior a short half-hour before.

She was quite white and still when North came in. There was not a touch of fever about her anywhere. Her hands were cool and quiet, her eyes calm, her voice level and unconcerned. Yet she

was utterly natural, and the firmness of her gaze had nothing forced about it. Had Dohan Junior, or North himself for that matter, been present or able to appreciate the full force of her attitude in that moment, he would have understood where a miraculous histrionic ability was to be sought.

There were those who knew, or said they knew, that North's name in some impenetrable past had been Nordheimer, and there were others who laid their belief to an ingrowing faith that only Jews succeed where managers dare to tread. His physical appearance went far to strengthen the latter position. There was nothing about him, dark as he was, to suggest Hebraic extraction to the superficial observer, though those who prided themselves on a keener sense saw in the lines that bracketed his nostrils and his lips the unmistakable subtle seal of Solomon. Be that as it may, he was a comely man, not tall but not heavy, scrupulously valleted and tailored, without superabundant finish, modestly accoutered, and giving forth a suggestion of vitality that was less rankly animal than constrainedly manly.

"You did not expect me," he said as he came in. It was not a question and yet she answered it. She rose and smiled and shook hands with him.

"I knew you would come—some time," she said. The one keen look she had taken of him decided her upon her tone. She did not speak lightly, nor overmeaningly. Her voice was unsurprised and natural. And she was speaking truth. For a long time she had known that he would come, and that she should see just that look in his face.

She seemed younger than ever beside him, as she stood facing him. As her hand dropped from his, he took a long, slow breath, watching her.

"You know—I think," he said, and the long breath did not by any means appear to have filled his lungs, "why I have come."

She was calmer than he. "I think I do," she said. She turned a small chair near her and sat down, one arm lying at length upon the table near her. For

some strange feminine reason she chose another than her usual place.

If anything had been necessary to affirm their mutual understanding of his reason for coming, the short, deep silence that cut a seeming circle around them would have sufficed.

North stood a moment at her shoulder and then walked a step or two away.

"I want to ask a favor of you," he said.

She was silent, her eyes on the ring that her thumb was slowly turning about around her finger.

"I know you well enough to be sure," he said at last, without a gesture, without moving, "that you do know a part at least of what I am going to say. It is because I want to say it all that I am asking you to listen to just that, to listen to it all, not to the part."

She was not looking at him, but she knew by his voice that he was not facing her. And her facile feminine detachment contrasted his pose with the attitude of the other man whose eyes had flared down into hers as if possession were a thing that brought no arguments. Only in bewilderment had Dohan Junior turned away, as if he could not marshal all his wits before her beauty. Even in this moment when her entire being was concentrated on her effort to be skillful, she could subconsciously take note of a bit of stage business for her "star." Even an audience who understood nothing would sense the meaning of that attitude, and hers. Things like this were said every day upon the boards that platter the overseasoned viands of a public whose appetite must be stimulated, said between man and woman face to face. She was even too detached now, too engrossed in the issue that hung upon the half hour, to recoil from the reality that brought forth words for her ear that neither she nor the man who said them cared to look upon.

He was evidently waiting for her acquiescence.

"You grant me that?"

"Yes," she said quietly.

There was another pause. "If I am verbose about it, don't think it is because I am trying to justify myself. It's not,

either, because I want to persuade you to anything against your better judgment. But I have so much at stake—so much at stake,” he repeated, “that I want you to know the whole of it before you give me your decision.”

“I will listen,” she said.

“I shall have to tell you many things that may seem—to you—superfluous. But you will bear with me.” His face had suddenly flushed a dark red and he began to walk about, always more or less behind her as if his blood were driving him slowly, remorselessly to and fro.

“I have been married ten years,” he said slowly. “I thought when I married that I wanted nothing in the world but the girl I had gained. I knew then that she did not love me, at least not deeply, but I was confident—overconfident—and I thought I could win the rest better afterward than before. I was rich, you know, and her—her family were satisfied. There was another man who loved her—it is all a part of what I have to tell you, though it may seem to you unnecessary.” He glanced at her, but she made no sign.

“He was—not rich. He had no position. He was a struggling lawyer at that time. And he had won no love of hers, nor—the friendship of her people. There was no secret about it among us all. I—I hardly thought of him. She was very pretty, and I knew of him only as a man, the inevitable one or two or twenty who had wished to marry her.

“Believe me, she was not persuaded to accept me from any motives, her own or those of others, that set us before her as a choice. He had never spoken to her of love, or marriage.

“I seem to have wandered a long way from the present. But I want you to understand it all. We—we were married. I need not tell you all the unhappiness we endured. The love I hoped for was impossible. Had I been older I should never have hoped for it. It is not a thing to be manufactured, but I did think I could create it.

“I have never fallen below the aim I had, to succeed, to give her everything I could imagine that she wanted. But

she has never loved me, and for a long, long time now I have ceased to wish that she would. We have grown steadily and surely apart, and we have lost all need or desire for each other.”

He was silent a moment, though his footsteps, halting and regular as they were, never ceased.

“This part is not easy to tell you, though I am determined you shall hear it all. When I understood at last that we could never mean in one another’s lives what I had hoped, what she had hoped, I did the common, vulgar thing. My position, my authority, my opportunity, made it easy. I tried to absorb myself in lesser things. I spent my nights and my longings and my money—outside of my home.”

Even in the intensity of the moment she smiled involuntarily. “Nordheimer”—she wondered if she had said the word. Yet after all the man was Homeric; he was tragic even to being funny.

“I made a reputation—a Broadway reputation. I don’t want you to know anything but the truth about me, and yet of course I know you have heard more of that side of me than of any other. I lived along like that, hating it and seeking it, for years. Then I met you. You came to me for a position. I was attracted to you because you were beautiful—but more because you were the rare thing. You were the delicate, pure, fine thing that so rarely strays into our world, and when it does, remains to our bewilderment fine and pure. Then—you know it—I had no doubt that I could make you mine. I was unbelievably stupid. I was what those years had made me. I did not stop to consider how different you were.

“Of course I found out—alone—my blunder. And then all my old dreams came back to me, the old dreams with a new clearness and a new beauty. I loved you.”

The woman winced suddenly, but he did not see it. She was a little wide-eyed, a little breathless. Her calmness had been born of a cocksure certainty that she understood this man. The loveless marriage, the plunge into tawdry dissipation—she had expected that,

though she had not known it would be so told to her. She felt suddenly appalled and alone. The scene was not going as she had prophesied. Important and crude the man might be, and yet in some subtle way he seemed neither. She felt her muscles stiffen as his voice went on.

"The occasions on which I saw you," said North, "rare as they were, were connected and bound together by the fact that you were never out of my mind when we were separated. You never felt that separation. You did not know that every hour we were apart was to me a long, long day in which I could dream of you, and—and suffer.

"I began to learn you by heart. You were a revelation to me. Your soul and body were to me so infinitely dear that I was conscious only of a greater agony when I began to understand your mind. I—I say in all humbleness that I don't pretend to any great understanding of it now."

He came to another long pause, and her tense figure relaxed into a renewed appreciation of his quaintness as he suddenly burst out: "The holes you pricked in the balloons I sent up! You told me every time when I was wrong, before anyone else guessed it. Why, I was so angry when you criticized 'Before the Hour' that I wouldn't speak to you. And it had to come off in two weeks. God, you were always right! You were right even about this Junior chap!"

She did not expect it, but she was sitting at ease now, and she showed no sign. She was not smiling, but she was once again the calm onlooker. This Junior chap!

"You took me to see him, in a rotten little vaudeville act. And you picked him. And look at him now!"

She was too wise to answer, fearing her own apparent calm.

His voice had changed again from its incisive business tone when he went on. "Yes—your mind was a new world to me. If I had loved you before for the perfume and the radiance of you, I began then to worship you as the God-given wonder, a beautiful woman with a man's brain."

A flicker of a smile came upon her lips and was gone again. She was sure of herself now. He made a gesture with both arms as though he flung the past from him.

"The rest of what I have to say is this: There are four of us in this act: the man who loved the woman I married, and she and I—and you! We'll take him first. He's a rich man himself now, and a fine one. You know him—he's my own lawyer, Thorpe. They haven't said a word to me, but I haven't watched men and women for nothing, you know that!"

She caught the tone of his assurance full, and it set to ringing in response her own arrogance of knowledge and power. Was she indeed as boastful as he?

"He still loves her, and—"

Suddenly his voice broke and his words came in hoarse tumble from his lips. "They could be happy together. I think she always loved him, but she was too young to understand. It does happen that way—in real life sometimes. I wouldn't stand in their way if I—if I wanted to. But—but—it'll take some time. I can't bear to think of how long. Because I want you and I want you now. But I'll wait. It's not only my happiness but hers—don't you see? It can all be arranged, and done. And then—"

He was facing her at last and standing before her exultant in his wild hope of ultimate happiness.

"God! I can put the earth down under your feet. There's nothing you can't be; there's nothing you can't do. I'll hang New York on a chain around your neck—and London—the whole earth. You can be a queen. You shall be. I don't want any of it. But I can help you get it. There's nothing you can't have. There's nothing—all of it, any part of it. I'll make 'em all into one neck for you to put your foot on. I'll—"

She rose unexpectedly, and with a sudden weakness eloquent in her. Her uncertain hand made a gesture that silenced him as he stammered before her. His drunken voice ceased. The dull red hammered up into his neck and face again. She could almost hear the beat

of it where she stood before him, almost swaying in her giddiness.

He went back a step, his shoulders heaving like those of an ox pulling a stalled load. She felt dazed and dull, and he seemed to be separated from her by a thick fog. Then suddenly his voice came again, as if it were choking its way through a veritable death to her. "Don't answer me now—for the love of God, don't answer me now!" he said.

III

NORTH walked to his home, in a dazed effort to regain composure in the grateful cool air of the autumn day. He had gone to Elizabeth Arnold with what he wished to tell her well thought out, and he had fancied himself prepared to carry through the interview quickly and without passion. But the look in her face had swept away all his coolness. What had it been? Not repulsion, though at least not sympathy. He told himself she must have known it was coming. Yet there had been amazement in her look. He frowned, kicking his way along the street like a child sent off unwillingly to school. Amazement—that was it. Yet she must have known—he caught at the explanation as it eluded him. She had known something was coming, but not what. The mistiness in his head cleared a little, and he felt suddenly more buoyant. He lifted his head a little as he walked doggedly on.

That was it. Well, he knew Elizabeth Arnold fairly well. He could see now what had been in her mind. She had been prepared—oh, well, heaven knows how long—for some word of his evident admiration and devotion. She had been ready with his dismissal. He had it clearly now. It was when he told her the whole story of what he knew and believed to be a modernly constructed plan to insure the happiness of four people, that she had opened her eyes in that first stare of disarmament. He told himself with a fleeting grimace that his stage manager's instinct had taken him off at the right moment.

After all, she could think it over. He

had begged her, with all a lover's dread of a final forbiddance, not to speak, but now he saw that he had been beyond his conscious thought. He was offering no inconsiderable position. She should be rich and successful; what woman wanted more?

He stepped out more briskly. It began to dawn upon him that there were a good many chances in his favor. She would think it over. She couldn't find him wholly impossible, considering the amount of time she had accorded him of her daily measure. And she had much to give him—together what could they not accomplish? She had an unerring instinct for the right thing, the play that would go, the man or woman who could act. Hadn't she dug up Dohan Junior? And her beauty and her youth and—perhaps most of all, without his knowing quite what it was—the blood in her untainted by a drop of coarseness, the fine tone of gentleness that he could never attain.

He had stumbled out of the hotel in a torture of presage of failure. But slowly the tang came back into his pulses, and he began to breathe slowly and deeply with the quietude of hope. He felt a cubit added to his stature.

As he went up the steps of his house, he came face to face with Thorpe—Thorpe turning away and putting up his cardcase. For one second he felt a laugh stirring in him. The encounter seemed to smack of the play. Then one more glance at Thorpe's face changed the current of his thoughts.

"What's up?" he said.

Thorpe put out his hand and North put his into it. It couldn't be classed among the cordial grips of good fellowship, for North was inattentive to all but the other's face, and Thorpe was what North had once characterized as "stringy" about it.

"That St. Louis contract?"

Thorpe withdrew his hand dully. "No," he said. "No, I haven't heard. The case doesn't come up for several days. I came to see you about something—quite different. I wonder if you can spare me a half-hour now?"

North flung him a quick look as he

caught at his watch. "I'm going over to Boston—so I'm not dining at home. I can do it. Come on in." He went up the steps easefully. A new access of elation had dropped into his contentment. He felt sure the move he had hesitated to make was going to be made for him. He twitched his key crisply in and out of the lock of the door, and let them both into the hall.

"It's a nuisance, this having to go over tonight. But I want to see that rehearsal tomorrow, and I'd rather go over and get to bed. This being on a train all night is bad business."

He threw off his coat and waited while Thorpe laid down his things on the great settee. Then he turned into his study and threw on the lights. "I'll send for a drink," he said.

Thorpe made a motion of refusal, and walked across the room to a big leather chair. "Not for me," he said. He sat down and twitched his coat into place. "I am very fortunate to have caught you."

North laughed. "You are, evidently," he answered. "You have something on that legal mind of yours that would have stayed by you nourishing you all night, as the chap said about the mince pie." He took a cigar from the box on the table and turned, leaning his weight against the huge desk, as he sought in his pocket for a match. "What's it all about?" His eyes fairly smiled as he waited.

Thorpe put his hands together so that the long, bony fingers interlaced. "It may be a surprise to you and it may not," he said. "It may be both. It was to me. I rather wished that Mary had gone to someone else. But that was a purely personal feeling which a lawyer should not have."

North lighted his cigar. "There's no need of our having any long preamble about this," he said, and the other man's eyes lifted a moment to his face in something like distaste, and fell again. "Mary went to you?"

"Yes," said Thorpe. "Yes, Mary came to me. I was your lawyer, and she wanted it to be done as quietly and unobtrusively as possible."

"Of course," said North, and there was a faint sneer on his face.

"I want to say first," said Thorpe, his voice rising in intensity, "that I enter into this matter at great personal reluctance." He looked up as he said it, and his eyes remained steadfast.

"Of course," said North again.

There was a short silence, and then Thorpe settled down into his chair with something very like a shrug of the shoulders. "It is very hard to have to deal with you, North," he said quietly, "because of our long association and because you don't quite belong."

North flushed in a thick way and opened his mouth. It shut again and the cigar supplied the lacking intention. Through the smoke he said finally: "You'd better stick to your business, hadn't you?" He puffed again for a moment. "I said at the start that we would waive examination—I believe that is the phrase." "It's as good as another," said Thorpe with a slight movement. "Well, then get on." North held his cigar somewhat rigidly as he turned it about to look at it.

Thorpe was silent a moment and his attention seemed centered on his boot tips. Inwardly North exulted. He half stood, half sat on the table, and the thing seemed too good to be true. He wouldn't quarrel with the fellow.

"Mary," said Thorpe—"Mary is unhappy. Of course you know that. She has known for a long time."

"Known what?" said North comfortably.

"Things too numerous to mention," said the other. "We'll dispense with the preamble." He watched his foot twist idly on the end of his leg. "She came to me and told me all about it—more or less. And she asked me to—well, to do something. It wasn't what I would have selected to do, but she has asked me, and I shall do it."

"Yes—" said North.

"I turned the matter over in my mind," Thorpe went on, "and finally came to a decision."

"You can't claim contempt of court," said North, and laughed.

Thorpe got to his feet. "It might

have come in any other event, very soon. I wish it had come sooner. I shall have to ask you to get another lawyer to attend to your affairs."

"Yes." North blew out a volume of pungent smoke. "Well, there are plenty of those," he said in a satisfied tone.

"There are—plenty of lawyers," said Thorpe icily. He paused and drew a long breath. "You'll allow me to say that I am very glad to turn over your affairs to anyone you may select."

"Go as far as you like," said North.

"Of course, from now on," said Thorpe, in a cool, level tone, "I shall represent Mary's interests. There might be, at the present moment, something you would like to ask me. If so, I can only say that my time is yours—now."

"You lawyer chaps are wonderful," said North. "I only wonder more of you don't write plays—though God and I know most of you do. All I can think of that I would like to ask your serene intelligence is—where and how the divorce?"

"There will not be any divorce," said Thorpe, and his voice was that of a man in ultimate relief. "I felt that you did not understand. Mary will sue you for a legal separation."

"Separations are neither fish, flesh nor good red herring," said North, smiling. "We'll have a divorce, thank you."

"You—won't get it," said Thorpe slowly.

"That can be settled at some other time," he said confidently.

"It is already settled," said Thorpe. "There are the children to be considered. It will be a separation."

IV

THORPE, being left behind by his host's impetuous departure, gathered up his hat and gloves and rather unnecessarily stared at them. Presently he laid them down again and rang. While he waited for the house man, he walked slowly up and down the room, precisely as a middle-aged lawyer should who was engaged in serious business. It apparently struck him, after a moment, that

he was being a bit humorous, for he stopped suddenly beside the table, and with a thin smile at himself, stood motionless, waiting for the servant to come.

"Will you ask Mrs. North," he said when the man appeared, "if I may see her?"

"Mrs. North is not at home, sir. She has gone out in the automobile with Master John."

Thorpe turned to pick up his hat again. "And Miss Eileen?"

"No, sir; Miss Eileen, sir, has a slight cold and has remained at home."

"Perhaps I could see her, then?"

"I will inquire, sir."

He heard the man in the other hallway speaking to the nursery on the house telephone, and knew before he returned to report that the nurse had said she would send Miss Eileen down. Accordingly the man's stiff message did not interest him beyond a decent nod of affirmation. "Please tell Mrs. North when she comes in that I should like to see her for a moment," he said, and went into the drawing room.

Eileen, safely engineered in her descent from the upper regions, came in alone, running to him with a childish squeal of rapture. "I'm not kissing sick," she announced, as she hurtled against his knees, and into the arms he had bent down to close about her.

"Kissing sick?" he repeated, swinging her up till she faced his smiling eyes. The child became grave with remembrance of past importance.

"Ven I was sick in my froat," she briefly reminded him.

"Oh, yes. Then I couldn't kiss you. So that's being kissing sick, eh? And that again means that there is no prohibition to my thus saluting you today, madam?"

Eileen always laughed at a long word—she didn't understand them, but she understood him.

"Sniff your glasses off!" she commanded.

Thorpe obeyed in this ancient rite, with the grimace she expected and hugely enjoyed. And then she solemnly took him by both ears and kissed him twice. He held her close to him a mo-

ment, and said, "Ah, that's it!" This, too, was of long custom.

When he had sat down, he shifted her to his left knee and regarded her serenely. "Shall I tell you something?" Her bright little head nodded encouragingly. "I don't believe you're sick at all!" He leaned back, challenging her to deny it. But she quite agreed with him.

"I amn't," she said. "I only coughed on trumbs. And I was out all noontime on the balcony, wrapped up. Muvver said so."

"But couldn't go out in the motor, was that it?"

Again she nodded, but as one who has tired of the subject.

"And how is Juliette? On the mend?"

There was more interest in her nod.

"So she's better, is she? Very shocking accident it was."

"We didn't run over her," explained Eileen, in the patient way children refresh the unconscionably poor memories of grown-ups. "She felled out of ve window, and jiggled on ve step. And nurse blewded ve tube, and Vickers stoped ve car and he gotted down and gived her up to me."

"Of course, I remember. And she had knocked the top of her head off, and you have the effrontery to maintain that you, a member of the idle rich class, did not seriously injure her?"

"Ve top of her head is only a vig," said Eileen, with great accent on the last word, an emphasis increased by her lurching toward him and bringing her head against his waistcoat with a friendly thump.

"Miss North, allow me to say, that so many ladies' heads answer that description, I'm afraid you cannot make her an exception. I feel sure, in the hands of an able lawyer, like myself, she could collect damages from you."

Eileen stared, puzzled. "Ve man at ve shop said she had it."

Thorpe laughed heartily. "You think she's collected sufficient damages from you already? Well I dare say you are right." His hand touched her curling bright hair tenderly.

"Vere has ve moon gone to?" she asked.

Consecutiveness is not remarkable in children's conversation. But consultations about the moon were held every time they met, and so he moved a little that she could get the wonderful watch from his pocket, and watched her as she gently urged the lid to open. He was wondering what word could describe the "feel of her" as she sat there, the precious feel of her little fragrant body so adorably soft and yielding. A tenderness for her that almost painful thrilled in his fingers that held her securely on her perch, while her tiny square slippered feet bumped cheerily against his leg just below his knee.

"Ve moon has all gone!" she squealed in delight. "Ven I sawed it ve last time it was up here, see—see!"

"Close tabs to keep on a humble suitor. I'm a very poor man, and I must work."

She glanced up suddenly distressed. "Is you a poor man?" she asked appalled.

Pain seemed to grip his heart. How poor, God only knew! Poorer than ever, with such borrowed treasure in his hands. Some sharp reflection of the thought must have shown in his face, for although he did not answer her question, the instinctive delicacy of the child averted her eyes and did not insist.

And just then Mary North came in.

She was very grave, behind the smile that greeted the picture that they made—made fleetingly, for Eileen slid down to the great abbreviation of her already sketchy petticoats and ran to her. Thorpe, rising, put up his watch.

Mary North was a sweet-eyed woman, whose happy and unhappy life had left no lines upon her face save those of character. She had been yielding all her years, to her parents first and to her husband later, but she was past that now. Her chin was firm, like her mouth, and her look was perhaps uncompromisingly direct. She was that most immovable of all antagonists, a woman with convictions.

Thorpe greeted her without a smile, but with eyes that were immeasurably kind. "I waited to tell you the result of my conversation," he said.

"It was good of you," she answered. She came forward and stood near him, drawing off her gloves. "I'm sorry I came in so late, but we had trouble with the car."

"It's not late—not very."

"Ah, but—" A look came into her eyes that was to her what a flush of discomfort is to other women. Mary had always had a fleeting and wayward color, but it had gone now. Perhaps her pulse had been beaten into submission.

"But you can't invite me to dine—is that it, Mary?"

"Yes." He noticed that she moved a little away from him, a scarcely perceptible movement, as he spoke her name.

"It won't take me long to say what I have to say," he returned, "although some of it will take longer than the immediate news. I think Eileen had better go and play with John, hadn't she?"

Mary turned her head, her lips parted. Then she glanced at him fleetingly as she sat down. "She's slipped out already," she said. "John was to bring her home some nuts."

Thorpe sat down facing her chair, but she was turned slightly toward the window, and looked more at the lighted street than at him. "You saw Hermann?" she asked quietly.

"Just before you came in. That is, he left the house some fifteen minutes earlier. He was going to Boston tonight."

"I knew that," she said. "That's why I waited, or had you wait, these two days since I finally decided exactly what must be done. You see"—she paused a moment—"we can't go on living in this house together. And it seemed better to go while he was away. I think you understand what I mean. We have had enough theatricalism." Another woman might have put some bitterness into the word, but it came from Mary's lips in the same even tone as the rest of what she said.

"That, of course—I mean your departure—is for you to decide. You don't think it better that Hermann should not return? You and the children need a place like this; he does not."

"I do not want to stay here," said Mary.

"You have plans?"

"Oh, I didn't tell you. I remember. Yes, I am going out of town. I arranged yesterday to rent a house at Mamaroneck. The children will really be better off there than here. And I want to get away."

"Perhaps you are right," he assented.

"I thought perhaps there would be less publicity in such an arrangement, too," she went on, her hands folded motionless in her lap. "It might seem odd if we were here alone when he was in the same city living elsewhere. And of course he has to be here. I'm not afraid of what I'm doing," she added, with no change of tone, "but I'd like as little gossip about it as possible."

"I shall do my utmost to prevent it," said Thorpe.

"Thank you," she said. "I have lived so long in the shadow of scandal that I want to get away into the sunlight."

"Mary," said Thorpe, "has Hermann ever spoken to you about divorce?"

"No," she replied calmly.

"He spoke of it today. I thought he would."

"Why did you think that?"

The man moved a little in discomfort. "Well, there are several reasons. It is thought by many people to be a wiser course than legal separation. After all, legal separation is only getting permission to do what you could do without it. And I knew," he went on, without a break as if he feared she meant to interrupt him there—"I knew Hermann to be one of those who think divorce the reasonable separation I mean. Moreover, I think Hermann wants to marry again."

"What makes you think that?"

"Nothing that I could put down in black and white," Thorpe answered. "It's just a gray impression. I told him you were determined against it, but he seemed to feel you were acting on impulse."

"He knows better than that," said Mary. "I have not acted on impulse for so long that even he has noticed it."

"Perhaps he was merely unwilling to

accept it as final. That might help to prove how much he wishes a divorce. I can see no other explanation of his insisting upon it."

"You mean insisting on the divorce so that he could remarry?"

"Yes."

"But I thought— Never mind."

"You thought he could not remarry?"

She glanced at him. "You always seem to know what I think," she said. Thorpe gazed rigidly at his clasped fingers and made no reply. For the first time, the woman looked troubled, realizing what she had done. She turned her face again toward the window, and presently spoke again.

"Yes, I thought that. But, of course, it is not so. I hadn't stopped to think. I am very sorry he feels that way, but I cannot help it. Is that all he said?"

"He said it could be settled at another time."

"Why another time?"

"He had to catch a train."

Mary North almost smiled. "I see," she said softly. "You explained to him that you would act for us both?"

"I can't do that, Mary," Thorpe returned. "I am acting for you."

"But you are his lawyer!"

"Not now."

She gazed at him in the gathering twilight. "I did not understand that, Curtis. I have been thoughtless."

"Good heavens, my child! Do you think I want to be his lawyer? I confess I wish I had not to tell him in the same breath that I am going to act against him. But the rest of it is indisputable relief—to us both. I'm not the kind of lawyer he wants, anyway. Let that go. I want to talk to you about more important things. For one, have you realized what Hermann may do if you go away?"

"Do!" she echoed. "You mean whether he'll live in this house or sell it—or what?"

"No, I mean something more serious than that, and yet that's part of it. Hermann may sell this house and live somewhere else, in another State, and divorce you. He could prove desertion."

She shook her head, entirely unmoved. "Hermann is not so bad as all that," she said.

"My dear Mary, I never said he was. But a man in love is capable of many things beneath and above him to gain his heart's desire."

"I don't believe him capable of attacking a woman," she replied.

"Believe it or not; I asked you if you had considered it. You have answered me. I want you to consider it now, and fairly. It is an extremely probable future that you may bring upon yourself."

He rose and walked the length of the room and back, and came to a stand beside her chair. "I'm going to talk to you frankly, Mary. There's no use our beating about the bush. I've known Hermann nearly as long as you have, and very much more thoroughly in his away-from-home aspect. I know his faults, but I also know his curious impracticality."

"Hermann impractical?" she said interrupting him. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about something I know, Mary," he retorted firmly. "Hermann is as impractical as a poet, only his nature is such that he dreams no dreams that are purely disinterested. But, I'll give you my word, I believe this dream of his freedom for himself includes your well-being and happiness, as he is crude enough to think them."

"I don't in the least understand what you are talking about," said the woman, without the least asperity. "Hermann knows my opinions on the subject of divorce, and how could he think to serve me by dragging me through one, particularly when I have the right on my side?"

"It's exactly what I told you—the man is a dreamer. He cares comparatively little for right or wrong. He cares all to be happy."

"But you said *my* happiness, Curtis. Of course I understand about his, though it seems to me a person who does not care for right or wrong deserves another name than dreamer."

"They often get it—always get it."

Sometimes it's 'poet' and sometimes 'dangerous criminal,' and sometimes 'successful politician.'" She motioned it away with her hand and waited for her real answer. It came slowly. "When I said your happiness, as Hermann understands it, I meant your own freedom to remarry."

She did not answer him. Thorpe stood motionless beside her. "He knows I love you, Mary," he said at last.

The woman rose and moved nearer to the window. "You have no right to speak of that," she said, "nor I to listen."

"That, my dear Mary, is only partly true. A person has the right to speak of anything which God has the right to put into his life. If you mean that it were wiser not to, I agree with you, again in part. Today we must not consider what is wise. We must consider everything."

She turned finally as if to face him and anything he might predict together. "Very well," she said, and her tone was rather that of relief. "Let us consider everything. I want to tell you first, however," she added gently, "that my decision will remain the same, because my view of divorce is too positive for me to act except in accordance with it."

"If you think I wish to unsettle it, you credit me with more selfishness than I deserve," he said quietly. "I merely wished to point out to you that, to the best of my belief, Hermann had somewhat your happiness as well as his in mind."

"You mean," said the woman unfalteringly, "that he knows I love you, too?"

Thorpe's sensitive face went white but his eyes remained on hers. "I had not meant that. I—" He made a sudden gesture and turned away from her. She threw out her hands and let them fall againathersides. But, hidden in the folds of her dress, they were clenched tight.

When he came back to her, for the second time, his voice was under control again. "You are right in one thing. If we are to consider everything, we must leave out nothing. I confess I have always held myself rigidly from consid-

ering that—that you might care for me as once, a long time ago, you thought you did. But when I spoke of your happiness, Mary, I spoke from Hermann's point of view. I have not the presumption to say that I could make you happy. But—oh, my God, how I would try!" The cry burst through his steady speech and seemed almost to strangle him. Mary leaned against the window behind her and set her teeth upon her under lip.

Presently Thorpe moved toward the doorway and touched a button that lighted the soft lamps on the several tables. Then he turned a chair near one of the lamps and motioned to it. "Sit down," he said dully.

"It's rather hard to go on, Mary," he said finally, "because really there is nothing more to be said except this one thing, and this may anger you. Believe me, I would not say it if it were not a thing I cannot leave unsaid. Your decision is taken, as you say. But if at any time you change it I shall be waiting. I have stood on the edge of your life a good many years. You'll always find me there. Or, if death should set you free, I will come to you and ask you for the privilege of—of trying to bring a tardy happiness into your life. No, don't answer me. I know what you are thinking. Believe me again, I am happier in that than in any other place."

He stood silent for several moments; then suddenly he lifted his head, walked over to a chair nearby, and dropped into it. "I have laid before you," he said in an entire change of tone, "the possibility you have to face of Hermann's proceeding against you. I want to ask you what your attitude would be in case he offered as an alternative that you institute action against him here?"

"My attitude remains the same," said Mary North. "I do not believe in divorce for any cause, and I will have nothing to do with it in any form."

"You mean, if Hermann divorces you, you would not consider yourself free?"

"I should not."

"Very well. I'll have a talk with him or his new lawyer and see what can be done. When are you going away?"

"Tomorrow."

"Send me your address, so I can write you. And now I'll go. I've kept you unconscionably long." He rose and picked up his hat and gloves.

"One moment, Curtis," said Mary slowly. "You approve of what I am doing?"

"Absolutely," he replied.

"And tell me one thing more. You said you had a gray impression, too vague for black and white, that Hermann wished to remarry. Do you know whom?"

Thorpe's answer was a flush of embarrassment.

"Oh, please don't think it curiosity," said Mary. She rose and came toward him. "Surely we must consider her, too."

"I have no real reason to think it," said Thorpe. "And no excuse to say it."

"We have had things to say today that had less," was the reply. "Don't you see what her position may be? Don't you see she may not understand what is going to happen?"

"You are right," said Thorpe. "I hadn't thought of that." He stood irresolute. "There's this much about it," he said finally. "She's not at all the sort of thing that has—has figured before. She's a gentlewoman. And—and, after all, I may be wrong about the whole thing."

"Don't you trust me enough to tell me?"

"It's not that. Surely you understand."

"Yes, Curtis, I understand. But I thought we had agreed to talk fairly. This isn't gossip. It's a very real and perhaps tragic situation. If she is a gentlewoman, her motives are of different stuff than such as can be lightly discussed."

"She is a very real and rather brilliant personage," said Thorpe, and added, with no great consideration of the absent North: "After all, I'm probably wrong about it all."

Mary dismissed that very briefly. "I think you are wrong not to tell me."

"Why, what good could it do?"

Thorpe inquired, but there was no impatience in his tone.

"I should go to see her," said Mary.

"Good Lord!"

"Don't look so aghast, Curtis. I shouldn't break in on her with crudities. Oh, my dear man, what is the sense in our keeping scrupulously out of reach of people when we are all being dragged together by such events?"

"But to have her think we had been discussing her—"

"She shall imagine nothing of the kind. Have you no faith in me? I don't see my way clearly as yet, of course. But I shall, before I go to her, if I do."

Thorpe suddenly surrendered. "I beg your pardon, Mary. I suppose I was acting on instinct, not reason. I was thinking of Elizabeth Arnold."

She was amazed and showed it. "Elizabeth Arnold!" she repeated. "Why, she's a great actress!"

"Hardly great, as yet."

"Nonsense. She is. Why—oh, I am glad you told me."

"Are you? I'm not entirely sure I am. It's the merest and most vague surmise on my part—"

Mary North almost laughed at him. "Oh, comfort thee!" she said softly. "Why, Curtis—" She became suddenly grave and her eyes wandered into the space before her.

"What?" he said finally.

"I'm rather glad, selfishly," she answered slowly. "It gives me a new respect for him."

He winced under his appreciation of what she meant, what she revealed.

They were both silent a moment. Then she gave her eyes to him frankly. "Trust me, Curtis," she said. "I am not a fool and I will not be a meddler. But somehow I feel as if I had a service to render that girl. I have admired her, and have always wanted to know her. I feel as if she must be protected for the sake of all of us. She's real—that's your word—and we need real people. I think you are wrong, but, even if you are, we can't take the chance."

"What shall you do?" He asked the question anxiously.

"I don't know. I shall go to see her. Oh, I have an old excuse. I've been on the point of doing it for a long time, for my own sake. Now I'll go for hers, too."

"But—"

"But you imagine two women are incapable of helping one another without the intervention of a man! Please, please—don't fret so sadly about nothing."

Thorpe turned. "All right," he said inelegantly. "I'll try not to. But I hope—"

"Hope for sense to understand that you are not an orphan in a world of idiots! You have lifted a great weight from me."

At the door he paused. "How?"

"Now that I know who she is, I know she will understand."

"What?"

"Me."

"God bless you!" he said rather sadly, and let himself out into the hall. His mind was full of misgiving, but the long strain had left him with that weariness which was weakness. So that the sight of Eileen on the stairs made him jump inwardly.

The child was sitting on the bottom step, and the movement that attracted his notice was her rising.

"Eileen!" he said. "Not in bed?"

She stood waveringly before him. Then, with all a child's half-articulate sweetness, she took a step or two nearer him and held out her hand with the words, "For you."

Thorpe took the hand in his. In the pink soft palm, unclosing like a rosebud, lay four ancient copper cents. As he looked at her face he saw it flush.

"I'm sorry it isn't more," she whispered.

Thorpe took the pennies from her hand, and kissed the palm where they had lain. His mind had gone back to their broken conversation.

"It's a lot," he whispered, the tears starting to his eyes. "You don't know, you don't know how much it is."

V

So adaptable is mankind that it has only to be assured the world is round to

feel it revolving. North, even in the hour of his talk with Thorpe, was conscious of the approach of his train time. He went off in a hurriedly summoned taxicab with breathless minutes to numb his senses until he felt himself swinging aboard an already moving car in the glass hood of the great station, and saw a known black face grinning down around white teeth, and relinquished himself to one stalwart arm even as he relinquished his coatcase to another.

"A mighty close thing, that, Mr. North," said the negro, as the two of them lurched back into security. "I don't believe any gentleman but you would be let through the gate like that."

North laid a hard hand at the end of a stiff arm against the door of the car, and gathered himself. He could never have said what, in the porter's words, had roused him poignantly to a sense of the hours past, but he rocked to his seat in the car repeating the phrase to himself—"A close thing."

He fell into his seat and indifferently nodded as Cole put up his bag. "A close thing." He tossed off his coat and settled back with his head against the cushion. He felt overhot and confused, as a man might who had been drinking. But presently the atmosphere began to clear around him, he felt the rock of the train, the presence of a number of fellow passengers, smelled the limp air of the tunnel and heard the noise of the engine and its dragging cars. He looked at the dark glass of the window and saw his own face fitfully mirrored there.

Then he began to think. He took himself back to the hour just passed, and suddenly the jar of the situation cleared his mind. It was not only a close thing, but a closed thing. He had gambled blindly—he had thought the game was his and suddenly his stake was gone. That very day he had explained, by an effort of self-control no one could ever appreciate, just where they all stood—particularly where he stood. And in the twinkling of an eye it had been so changed he had nowhere to stand.

He set himself to go over the thing carefully.

The plan he had set forth, to himself and finally to her, had seemed so perfect a thing that it was not to face a verdict whether it could be or not. That Mary should divorce him and marry Thorpe was the only way out of all their dire distress. As he looked at it, there were four people to be adjusted; and through an unusually complacent fate, the adjustment was a thing to be devoutly wished by every one of the four. He had been so sure of it, he had never doubted the wisdom of his step in laying it all before Elizabeth.

He felt a nervous twinge vibrate through him. And then the quick revulsion—as quickly lost: "It must be so; it will be all right." The confidence was gone almost before he had felt it. Thorpe had spoken in his stringy way, very positively. There was not going to be any divorce!

He was full of an ineffectual rage as he faced it. Children to be considered—why, in the name of all that was sensible, couldn't people get down to common sense instead of maundering around through copybook maxims? What did children want? Health, training and a fair start! What did it matter to them, he wondered, whether he or Thorpe was coming up to the nursery at night to tell them a story or to bring them the contraband caramels? Suppose he had never married Mary—and what was the use in supposing anything of the kind?

The point was that her attitude was absurd. He would give her a large income for the children and herself—Thorpe could do as much again. That she cared more for Thorpe than for anyone else on earth, except the children, was apparent to him, and must be to her. And Thorpe had always loved her. Very well. It sounded so like an agreement in an argument, a point gained, that he hung upon it—very well. Then how was it going to benefit the children or their four selves to perpetuate a remediable dilemma? If it was the children, as Thorpe said, what were they to gain by withholding happiness from their mother and their father, to grow to an understanding that their child-

hood had been passed in a house that had lacked love?

He moved impatiently in his stuffy corner, and turned his head away from the window to stare elsewhere. Granted that he and Mary had made the supreme blunder, was it going to improve matters by stumbling on in the same direction, even if they went by solitary ways? He had never been able to understand the spirit that insists upon treading a beaten path. He saw no irrevocable right in one way or another, except that of immediate and imperative desire. Mary did not love him, nor did he love her. There was another lifetime possible to each of them, with all happiness and all harmony and all success. Then what was this firm resolve upon her part to get her to a nunnery for the sake of the children? Their name, their fortune, their tranquillity was not jeopardized but absolutely assured by the change.

If he could have stayed and talked to them both together! No, he knew even that would have altered nothing. There was something very like Thorpe about Mary—they had ideals and no ideas. It was one of their crazy notions that the situation in which he and his wife were placed was a holy of holies instead of a mere human mistaken attempt to realize what was impossible under such conditions. He endured an eruption of volcanic ineffectual fire as he thought how impossible it would always be to infuse in them a little of the conviction that he confessed, the conviction that life was not a bitter dose of going without but a chance to achieve.

It was significant that not once did he say to himself that he would go back and persuade them to his way. The gift that had helped him to his present place was that of understanding people, of understanding them even when he was unable to comprehend them. Mary's attitude was not to him a thing to be manipulated, but something definite and immutable, with which he had now to reckon.

A separation meant—well, it meant that he could give the children all and no more than he could under a divorce. It meant that Mary and he would be as

far apart as if one were living and the other dead, and that his boy and girl would know of him only as a far-off name that had no face. What in heaven's sense would they miss of all that if a reasonable freedom were included? They would not lose but gain—gain an actual living father whom they need never, at least for years, know to be other than he would have been. And Mary would be happily, rightly married to Thorpe. And he himself—he twisted about in his chair and drew a deep breath. He himself—and Elizabeth!

All this was futile. He knew Mary had not overlooked this statement of the case. And he knew it was not, with her, either puerile fear of publicity nor an uncertainty of her own mind. It was that most horrible of all human acquisitions—a principle. Not one of all the things that had been done in the name of vice had ever equalled the crimes of so-called right, he told himself, and felt that he had sounded a new depth in the age-old problem. To keep well within the rules of a certain restriction might be intelligent in architecture or poetry or any other of the circumscribed arts of a present development, but was it worth ignoring the clean air-swept elemental impulse to do the human, normal, earthy, sane, unplanned deed? Was the hewn fragment to endure long after the eternal seasons had brought the sun and the rain and the falling leaves?

It was one of the curious, unhumanly interesting things about North that there lived somewhere in his dulled, overfed being a spark of the everlasting poesy of the Jew. Far down beneath the effectual exterior of the modern over-civilization there burned, half ashamed, the unquenchable fire of the chosen genius. He loved Elizabeth Arnold, half unknown to himself, with all the empire-sweeping passion of those legendary kings who made God himself their own. Viewed by an indiscriminating eye, he was a dark-haired individual slouching in a dusty car, railing at circumstance. The indiscriminate eye might have been his own. He never saw himself too high or too exalted. But as a matter of fact

he was writhing in the hereditary force that came "up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke." He was Judea, and Judea thwarted.

North was not a devout man, nor one inspired. Had he been, he might have swept confusion upon all his enemies as Samson dragged down the temple upon the Philistines. But although the forces of great things ran in his blood, he had been taught in a dire grinding school of expediency to go a roundabout way.

As the train roared on through the evening seeking the night in far places, he pondered a plan. It never occurred to him to step out into the open. The trails of a thousand huntings crowded him into a cowardly evasion. What could he do? That he must win his desire was paramount. Nor was he crudely wanting his own desire. In the old sad, marvelous way, he felt that he was right.

Granted that not even by their own laws would they manipulate the achievement of a *bonheur carré*, there must still be some solution to the problem. One or even two people must not be able to say, "We are the masters of our fate and yours." There must be some way out, he told himself. And he said it again and again.

To do him justice, it never came to his mind that he had told Elizabeth Arnold that he could open a door which was now closed to him. Nor did the alternative of living outside all doors present itself to him. As a matter of drab fact, he set himself to consider the curious net-work of conflicting jurisdiction in a country that claims to be united. He had his good points and his bad ones.

Up and down in the car, life went on in its wonderfully calm fashion when the initial law of existence is being disregarded. People who were accustomed to sitting at home, in a quiet, secure room, sauntered thoughtlessly to and fro along the vertebræ of the fire-eyed serpent that flung its sightless way along a track through the dark. Not one of them gave a thought to the disquieting fact that, for all the imposing quality of the structure they had left, it had no jurisdiction over human failure, for all

the reassuring print upon their tickets their safe conveyance depended upon one mortal hand to which failure was a God-given dispensation. One woman with a little child, whom she would have shielded from the over-bright rays of the sun, went up and down the aisle smiling serenely and watching the tottering tiny feet of her daughter with a smile in her eyes that no thought of sixty miles an hour had obliterated. A stream of people moved forward into the dining car, and then returned, and one saw their faces. North didn't. He had not thought of dining. He had not subconsciously thought of danger.

It was one of those nights that newspapers refer to as unusual. No one ever seems to remark upon it as an amazing fact when no accident occurs. There are no headlines over an announcement that the Boston express drew into its station safely and proudly discharged so many uninjured souls.

North, plunged deep in his absorption, could never have told whether the crash came before the shock or afterward. There was a vast confusion in his mind, a waking from his mental preoccupation, a flash of information that something had happened; and then, in a seemingly long space of time, interminable grinding thunder, upheaval and chaos. The heavens fell, and the earth opened and vomited out all hell, and between the two something that seemed like conscious mind was ground as between the upper and the lower millstones. Flashes of light, wild cries of terrified agony and a smother of fire surged about him in one deafening moment of roaring delirium, and then in one blinding blaze of white were obliterated and a darkness fell that had no explanation.

He opened his eyes at last because the drumming seemed to rouse him. He could not tell whence it came nor what it was. It pounded with a sort of insistent menace.

He lay, staring through half-closed eyes at something that seemed to be a hilarious heaven, dark and yet bright blue, with stars that swung and swooped and seemed drunkenly to laugh. It made him dizzy to watch them, and gave him

a hideous sense of anguish. The overwhelming sense of their determined blasphemy mounted about him like the water of the sea about the ears of a drowning man, and he slipped back into a nauseating oblivion.

When he opened his eyes again he was lying on the grass. A sense of peace broke out through his skin like a sweat. He clutched the arid green despairingly and in the very instant of swinging off into that sickening space clawed his way back to a frantically desired and dreaded wakefulness. It all came back to him now. He drew a long breath, and shuddered. The night, which had seemed full of meteors, became gradually something more terrible. The horrors of it pressed down upon him like a nightmare.

With that came the sense of unshakable responsibility. He became conscious of a hoarse noise in the air like the calling of many gulls. He heard a titanic cracking as of many whips; and underneath it all a continuous murmur of groans that seemed as if it might never end, something as changeless as the prolific sea. It was the noise that roused him fully. He had never heard it before, but he could not mistake it. It was humanity beneath the wheel.

Dazedly and yet suddenly he sat up, and his vision of the pulsating sky changed abruptly to one of a dark stretch of earth, a flaring mass of conflagration and the fitting detached spots that marked where indefatigable human nature still over-conquered the puissance of death. The weird blaze seemed to light nothing, to make everything visible merely by making it black. The train—that was it—the train. He thought someone had said it near him, but he was quite alone. The beating noise in himself resolved itself into acute pain, and became articulate. As he moved, it screamed, as if begging him to be still. But no faintness followed it.

His two hands came together slowly, like those of a man who has been long ill, and touched feebly. It was almost like the clasp of a friend. The nerves thrilled at the contact and his fists closed, till he knew they were shut. Something masculine rose and cried out

at the moment. An exultation leaped in him, defying all outward power. He swung his arms widely and cringed, but the muscles obeyed him. He staggered to his feet, and fell, and rose up, grimly.

Swaying on his feet, he felt suddenly ill. The helplessness was gone in a moment and he was up again, pushing his hands over his forehead, and letting them, apparently of their own initiative, feel their way over his entire body. The masculine cry died down to a hum, but it was still singing in him as he stretched himself to his full height and gulped in the air.

The responsibility came over him again at that moment in an undeniable force. The flare and the noise about him suddenly separated into camps, the foe and the home folks. He caught his breath, shouted and jumped forward.

There was a man near him struggling with a mass of wood that had not begun to burn. Without a word, North tossed off his coat and ran to assist him. As the weight yielded, he saw his own coat ignite and flare, and then the sweat began to run down into his eyes.

What happened later became clear to him only afterward. He could remember the call for help, the eager press forward, the unintelligent effort, the screams, the horrible things they found, the frenzied sobbings of blessings, the unbearable cursings of those who could still curse, the frantic half-blindness in which he worked as one of the ever-thickening mob of creatures which clustered closer and blacker about the unspeakable horror. The woman and child whom he had seen on the train came to his mind in the midst of the scene, and he set off at a run to find them, stupidly as everything else was done. Into the cool, black air the flames leapt with no less crazed appeal than the voices—those voices he would never forget till he was dead, and not then. He couldn't find them—the woman and the child. He ran about, falling over charred embers and wrecked fragments, pulling things about and crying out like a hound on the scent.

A hand gripped his ankle, and he wavered and stopped. He stooped and

found a pair of eyes looking into his like disembodied ghosts, luminous and steadfast. There seemed little else. But the lips beneath managed to speak. "There's a revolver . . . trousers . . ." North looked into the eyes and obeyed, as he would have obeyed a divine command. He set his teeth and fumbled about the involved mass of clothing. "I've got it," he said. "I want you," said the stiff lips, "to shoot me." North put the weapon to the temple beside the eyes, and shot.

As he scrambled to his feet again, sobbing and shaking, he heard a voice calling near him. "Mr. North!" "Mr. North!"

The words conveyed no meaning to him—he was one of a mass of underservedly tortured humans in hell. As he floundered down the slope, still heedlessly intent on his search for the child and the woman, a hand swung him about by the shoulder. He looked into a wide black face. "Mr. North?" said the porter, and then the grip seemed to swing him away. "My God, I can't find him!" the negro wailed, scrambling onward. "Mr. North—has anyone seen Mr. North? I can't find him."

VI

ELIZABETH ARNOLD, during her hour with Hermann North, did not visibly achieve the physical weariness that engulfed her on his departure, for she had hardly spoken, and had not moved from her chair. But the fatigue came, and increased after a certain bewilderment had given way to cruel distinctness on the part of a small voice that would not be still. "He'll get on," said the voice; "he has a wife and home and children—he's all right!" And if the voice conveyed in the last phrase a good deal of contempt and an equal amount of cheerfulness, it was no more than she had done herself, in talking to Dohan Junior, for of course the voice was her own in retrospect.

Although she had no sympathy with North in his position, she found herself unable to have more for herself. At

least he was dealing in big futures—he wasn't messing himself all up in directing an equivocal flirtation—not to say staving off the honorable day when it should come to an end. It was part of the weariness that she should wonder rather weakly if perhaps that silly, dear, plain-speaking Dohan was right—that all her superior airs of maternal supervision were balderdash—that, even if there was something to be got out of it, if it had to be got that way, one was better off without it. Her depression was an extremely honest one, anyway. She went over her relation to these two men, from the very beginning of her acquaintance with Dohan, when she had become interested in him because he looked so like her manager, down to the very present day when both had more or less delivered their ultimatums.

One thing became plain, in spite of her feeling of blameworthiness. That was that she had nothing to say to North, nothing that could be said. If he had waited, she would have told him some of these things, but they increased alarmingly each instant—and, after all, he would know them all the very next day. He and Dohan had both gone off with the last word, the woman's ancient perquisite, but she could answer them both at once without any more ado.

It was amazing how the heaviness departed from her heart and the weariness from her body when she thus decided to abandon that work of years for which she had pleaded with Dohan that very day. She found her lover suddenly infinitely dearer as she faced the demolition of her labor, and set herself to be content with his. Perhaps tardy surrender to the ancient masculine prerogative of supremacy is more complete than a general drifting acceptance of it from the first. At any rate, her capitulation to Dohan was as utter as it was sudden.

She rose from her chair in one swift motion, rising to her full height, her eyes shining and her lips parted. In a moment or two of breathless impatience she had him on the telephone, and laughed softly as his voice changed from an uncertain coldness to a boyish excitement as he gasped: "What—now? Now? At

once? Oh, Beth!—God bless you!" She could hear his breath in a wordless inward sigh as he dashed the receiver away, and she knew he was calling to the club porter for a taxicab before he had the door of the booth fairly open.

She ran to her room, laughing and with the blood thrilling in her finger tips. Her maid watched her curiously as she helped her with a simple street toilet, but Miss Arnold was uncommunicative except as the merry humming of snatches of melody broken by recurrent shortness of breath might have betrayed her. She was ready even in the remarkably short space of time he took to reach her. She was standing drawing on her gloves when he came in, standing to face him, rosy, smiling, half shy, half passionately happy.

"Beth—Beth!" He caught her close to him and held her. His heart was beating wildly. She could feel it striking impatiently against her breast as if clamoring for admittance. Ah, well, it was welcome enough in all the world. Dohan did not actually kiss her, but kept her locked in his arms, his face against hers, both of them trembling with the joy of it. Then he suddenly released her. "It's late," he said. "We must hurry."

She laughed. "I'm ready," she said.

He did kiss her then, twice, thrice, hungrily and rapidly. Then, holding her hand, he hurried her to the door. She went with him gladly, rejoicing in her own defeat.

It was soon over, in the course of events, each one of which seemed to Dohan malignantly devised to delay him. The license, the ring, the clergyman, the short ceremony itself, seemed to fill far more valuable time than he could endure to spare. And, indeed, when they came forth from the rectory in that small garden bit of old New York where so many of their confrères had been married, the great clock in Madison Square chimed slowly and struck six.

Dohan gave a cry. "Beth! I've got to go!"

She was trembling a little again and a bit hushed in her happiness. But at

his words the professional woke in her, and she straightened her drooping figure briskly.

"You must, at once!" she cried. "Good heavens! Call that cab over there for me, won't you?"

He obeyed reluctantly. "Oh, hang the whole thing, Beth! What a way to begin our life together! Can't we at least get a bite of dinner—"

She shook his arm as if he were a naughty child. "Certainly not!" she said. "I'm going straight home. You'll get your bite more quickly without me. Why, silly, it's your opening night!"

"I wish—" he began moodily.

"Now hush! Remember what it means to—us."

He pulled himself together with an effort.

"Beth, are you coming to see the show? I'd rather almost you didn't! Suppose—but no, I want you there. You'll come?"

"Of course I'll come," she said. "God bless you, boy, and—good luck!"

Elizabeth found her old anxiety about Dohan's first night on Broadway swept away in the new elation that possessed her. She was afraid of nothing now. The world and success and happiness were theirs from now on. She dressed for the theater slowly, and with even greater care than she usually bestowed upon her toilet. She was captious about her gown, and hesitated long in the choosing of her jewels, but there was none of her raiment that adorned her half so much as the sweet glory of her smiling eyes.

In the lobby of the theater she met Marshall, the manager. Naturally there was no question as to finding a place for her, although the house was practically sold out. He went to see what he could do.

It was just as he was starting away that she caught sight of Thorpe, and he of her. An undeniable pleasure flavored her smile, the kind of thing that drew him irresistibly to her side. She would not have known what North meant by calling him "stringy." She liked his thin face and his gray hair and his knotty, nice hands.

He came over, his wrinkles rippling around his eyes like the lines in water about two pebbly disturbances. "Are you alone?" He made a gentle compliment of the question. "I dropped in from the club—nothing was further from my thoughts! But Junior—I knew his father. A dear lad. Couldn't I get you a place next mine?"

The "dear lad" might have referred to father instead of son, but both would answer. She wanted suddenly very much to be with Thorpe—an old friend he seemed suddenly, a sort of family matter. She hardly let her fingers slip from his hand as she turned her eyes to Marshall. "Can't you 'do' for us both?" she begged. "It's so awful sitting alone."

Marshall, being human, lost some alacrity as the welcomed third came up. But it was a mere shade, and it meant nothing to him. "I can put you in a box," he said, and seeing no shrinking horror in their faces, turned to despatch a magic word into the ticket office, and turned back with two scraps of mauve cardboard that the large man in gray at the wicket refused to be impressed with, merely waving them in.

Now the channel was not without its narrows. For all that Thorpe and Elizabeth had met often, and that he smiled really when he saw her, and that nothing on earth could have made her see him as North saw him, was evidence enough that they were potential friends at least; what she actually knew of him was that, on good authority, good enough anyway, he wanted to marry the woman he had loved so long—and had she not forever, perhaps, put an end to his chances? What he did not know, but actually guessed, was that North wanted to make her his wife; and had he not that very day closed the door for him upon the field of freedom? The fact that she was an unusually good actress and he an unusually keen lawyer were enough to have superseded the play and turned all interest on their box, had the audience been aware of what was going on before the curtain instead of being persuaded that the importance of the evening lay behind it. As it was, many of them noticed the beautiful girl in royal blue, and some of

them recognized her and the thin, pleasant, elderly man, whom nobody cared especially to know, as they came in and settled themselves.

Elizabeth was not in her usual mood. She had decided to drag the whole structure down by the central pillars, even if it crushed Dohan and herself, and she was thrilled with the excitement. But Thorpe never guessed. She was beautiful and quite imperturbably calm, though of a glow like a rose.

"Tell me," she said. She had seated herself, and glanced at her program and at the house and at a little girl in a seat just below and near her who wanted, out loud, the curtain to go up. "Tell me, of all banal questions the one which has an interesting answer—what have you been doing?"

Thorpe was busy hanging things up, but he came soon after and established himself at an angle beside her, and she saw then that he was smiling. She noticed that, and then, being a woman who saw what she was looking at, wondered if she had not been immeasurably unkind to drag him from a bachelor distraction in a seat alone. He was a bit drawn, and all that, but he had presumably stopped in here, driven from his club, for an hour of absolute mental relaxation, a sort of Turkish bath for gray matter.

But Thorpe caught up his glasses and still smiled at her. "It has been the devil's little season," he said.

Elizabeth's eyes dropped to the *pince-nez* in his hand. She felt the man was brave and her heart warmed to him, while his tone rang in her ears. Then she remembered his words.

"The devil's little season?" she echoed.

"Tut, tut," said Thorpe, assuming an elderly pose, while again they smiled at one another; and she saw suddenly that he looked like her father when he was in a teasing mood and wouldn't admit that he was ill. "You don't read the Bible, my dear Miss Arnold."

He laughed at her indignant denial. "It is really no test—so few people go in for Revelation nowadays."

She could not help it, any more than she could have had he been that father.

"They do," she said. "Two people have gone in for it today in my presence—rather heavily!" She smiled, with a courage that matched his own. "But I am not trying to put you off!"

"I myself might not remember it," he said chivalrously, "except that it caught me as a child and I have remembered it ever since. The devil was to be put in bondage a thousand years, and then released for a little season."

She laughed suddenly. "Season is such a cut and dried term with us," she began. But he paid her an anciently constructed compliment. "Certainly never dry to me, and certainly never cut"—his lifting eyes said "for you" so plainly that he had no need to speak the words.

Elizabeth drew back. "If you are going to be polite!" she said, as if the world had come to very near an end. She looked down at the diligent orchestra a moment and her face became a bit grave. She was thinking of things she must not say, and the oddness of their being together that very night; and in an endeavor not to speak what was on her lips thrust in a childish inquiry.

"Everything at sixes and at sevens, as the man in 'Pinafore' says?"

"I was always a poor hand at arithmetic," said Thorpe, "but I dare say you are right, as six and seven makes thirteen, and luck flies out of the window—you know."

He was so delightfully winning in his determination not to spoil her evening that she wanted quite ungratefully to cry on his shoulder.

"I'm sorry," she said blankly.

"My dear young lady!" It was so charmingly old-fashioned. "What would lawyers do if everything went smoothly?"

"Ah, but when lawyers complain!"

"Was I complaining? And I in fool's luck!"

She let her eyes rest on his lovable, thin face a moment and felt a determination to speak to him gathering in her heart even as he saw it in her eyes. Perhaps he feared it and drew back a little. Perhaps the cessation of the loud music distracted her.

But at any rate, the curtain went up and she had not spoken.

A first act and a first night sometimes produce a dire effect in combination, but except for minor tragedies, such as the lack of a wastebasket where an important wastebasket should have been, and a general tendency on the part of the leading heavy man to forget that he had left his dinner party at Blank's, the act went extremely well. It had snap in it, and you really could not see how the hero was going to get out of his predicament.

After a few friendly curtain calls when the lights went up and the orchestra began again, Thorpe was discovered polishing his glasses and not looking up. "I'm not going to be such an ass," he said quietly, "as to pretend to you"—there was an accent on the "you" because he liked her—"that I have not got a very matinee choke in the throat. I can do better than that—I can tell you why."

Elizabeth closed her fingers on her program. She wanted to hear, but she did wish that bobbing thing in her breast would be still. Although the applause of the house had meant to her what it can never mean to a person who has never received it, she was conscious most of all that she was with this man on the stage, quite inside the artificial circle. They were implicated in a drama far more real.

Thorpe polished his lenses and seemed in no hurry to go on. But she did not speak and at last he said, putting away his handkerchief: "Dohan Senior was one of my friends. I don't say my best friends, because I don't know what that means. I've had only three—Dohan and my mother and one other. I—I don't make friends easily."

She drew a long breath and looked at him. "Tell me about Dohan Senior," she said.

He was a long time silent, and she wondered if she had done wrong. But she was reassured at last by his voice. "The boy never had any other name," he said, and the smiles rippled again in his face as he glanced up. "I mean this one." He jerked his head toward the proscenium. "'Jerry Dohan' in those days

was such a name—in one—if you understand—that when the boy came they called him Junior.

"There isn't anything especial to tell—outside the brilliant professional life we all know about. He was like Junior—everybody loved him. They couldn't get on without him, which makes it harder to remember how long we have had to!" He paused a moment. "No, there isn't anything to tell. Just that everybody loved him."

"It tells a great deal," said Elizabeth softly.

She did not look at him as the curtain rose again, but she distinctly felt that he relaxed under cover of the semi-darkness and her inattention. She knew the play as she knew her prayers, and without Junior on the stage could give it a divided interest. What, she wanted to know of herself, was the trouble? Had Thorpe already guessed that she would not be the one to help him to his heart's desire? Or did he indeed need anyone to help him? If North had spoken truth—and she saw no reason to doubt him—was she, or any woman, necessary to the plan? But doubt of him crept in as she sat there with Thorpe. It was no plan of his—she felt that, she knew it! What was it North had called it—his "stringiness"? The odd little word made her smile faintly, but she knew—oh, she knew now what North meant by it.

She drew herself a little erect as she found herself slipping unconsciously into a brooding attitude, her cheek in her hand. And she heard Thorpe move a little as if her action had recalled him to himself. He, too, was merely mechanically observant of the stage.

As Dohan Junior came on the applause broke out cheerfully and cordially. There was no wild enthusiasm, not a perfunctory welcome. It was personally and reminiscently affectionate.

Thorpe's face was white but smiling as he leaned nearer. "He's all right," he said whimsically. "Jerry Dohan has left him a fortune."

The loneliness that she had fought down all day ached in her suddenly at the words. The man beside her, whom she had always liked so much, had in the

hour become a near and dear sort of godfather to Dohan, to herself. All day the fact that she had had no kin to be with her in the hour of her happiness had driven her isolation in upon her heart, and in spite of her exaltation had left her, without her own knowledge, unpoised and weak. Her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

The friendly racket of the house filled the air behind her. Thorpe laid his hand on her arm, for he saw that her face was not sad. "Have I distressed you?"

She shook her head and slipped past him into the dark background of the box. "Mr. Thorpe," she said. He was beside her and she unconsciously took his hand.

"You're not ill?"

"No," she said, with a sudden sob, "but I am so very happy!"

"God bless me!" said he softly.

"I've been so happy all day that it hurts cruelly—because I have no one to tell. And you do care for him! You see—what you said—and I have been so lonely—" She wiped her eyes.

He stood bewildered, patting her hand. Being a lawyer, he had seen many men and women in trouble, but this situation perplexed him.

"Junior and I were—were married today," she said tremulously, and fell silent, wondering at the cheerful ache of tears in her throat.

"God bless my soul!" said Thorpe softly but with emphasis. He nearly dropped the hand he held.

She managed to laugh a bit. "You're glad?"

He wondered at the tone, even as he tried to adjust himself to her news. "Glad!" he echoed, and the words woke the tremendous gladness that lay beneath his surprise. "I'm delighted. My dear, what glorious news!" There was no mistaking his sincerity. She had been first wrong, then right about him—here was no schemer with the destinies of others to gain his own ends.

The applause had died down and the act was proceeding. "Forgive me for being silly," she said. "I'm going home. Take me out, will you please? I want to say something to you."

He got her cloak and put it about her, and held the curtain for her to pass. Out in the deserted lobby again she paused to adjust her scarf. The few sudden tears and all trace of them had disappeared. She was radiant again.

"Do you suppose Junior will notice we have gone?"

"He won't be hurt, if that's what you mean. I doubt very much if he knew we were there."

"He's done well."

"Lord, yes!"

"Well, I want you to do something for us. Will you? Will you stay and tell Junior, and then come up with him to my apartment for supper?"

"Oh, my dear! He won't want me!"

She laughed and became serious. "Yes, he will; and I want you! No, it isn't because there is no one else. It's very much because there is you." She said it slowly, but far from stupidly. But he looked at her in sudden comprehension. It was rather a sweet fineness in her, he thought. He could see how such a woman would shrink from taking up her new life almost in secret.

"I'll come," he said. "And thank you."

At the door of the cab she suddenly paused. "Oh, dear me," she said, turning back to him helplessly, "I'd forgotten, but this is my maid's night out! She goes to see her sister on Staten Island once a week!"

Thorpe laughed at the feminine detail. "I'll telephone my Japanese boy," he said resourcefully. "He can get everything we need at the club and bring it over in a cab. We'll do famously."

"How wonderful of you!"

"Wonderful—what?" He was laughing. Somehow his quickened faith in the goodness of life was making him younger.

She laughed, too, drawing her cloak again about her. "To have thought of it," she said, "and not to say 'Jap' and 'phone'!"

"Ah, I find abbreviations too short to fill my life," he answered, as he put her into the taxicab.

"But most of all," she was saying,

"for not suggesting that we sup elsewhere."

"Oh, I'm an old man, I grant you, but I know something!" He bowed to her, smiling, as she was whirled away.

VII

NORTH watched the shadowy form of the porter disappear into the fitful darkness. His mind was dazed by two questions: what had the man meant by saying he could not find him, even as he looked in his face; and what had held him from setting such fears at rest? He was conscious of having felt an instinctive impulse to silence, an active shrewdness that had laid a hand of warning over his mouth—a secondary personality that was acting for him in his absence, giving orders but no explanation. It was nevertheless bewildering, for even now this other force had not relinquished its sovereignty. It held possession of him as the relief train crept close to them, as he saw the quick, efficient little army of doctors and nurses and wreckers disembark; and then silently and effectually started him away from them over the embankment, tripped him and rolled him to the bottom. And quite calmly then it started him off across the placid fields, whose sleep might be the more disturbed by his hurried footfall than by the cataclysmic tragedy so near at hand.

He found himself sitting on the raw edge of a trolley cut, bruised here, burned there, tattered everywhere, a very scarecrow except for the black overcoat he dragged about him which he had caught up somewhere. He felt himself suddenly relinquished by the grinding force, thrown back upon his own responsibility. He knew there was something back of all this, something that after a few moments' respite was to come heavily upon his own unaided shoulders. But he could not now know what it was. He pressed his hands over his damp forehead. At least he had not been a coward. He remembered, as if he had read of it in a book, that he had done all he could. He had even taken

one man's life—he wished, with a sudden shudder, he had taken more. But it was all misty, and in his craving to get his bearings in the fog, he almost called himself by name. A clue came with the words.

He remembered now the black face peering into his own, turning away with the dejected cry: "I can't find him." And suddenly it all came clear. He had no other way of seeing his own face but in the mirror of his imagination, sooty, disheveled, distorted—it was no wonder he had not been known for the precisely immaculate Hermann North. Probably it was the negro's first encounter with that form of metamorphosis—he had lost what negligible intelligence he had. One-half his difficulty was solved in his gradual resumption of personal authority. Remained the question of his not having declared himself. He had not replied: "But I am Mr. North!"

He realized, as he focused his thought upon it, that this was the better half of the question. He had denied, silently it is true, his own self; he had waited and helped as a man must who intends to live with himself for years to come, until more efficient help arrived, and then he had disappeared. He had disappeared. His face came up from his hands as if a sudden light had shone fiercely upon it. Great God in heaven, he was among the missing!

He was fully alive and awake now, and thrilling with the detail of the future. He sat up, digging his heels into the gravel, no longer conscious of the throbbing feeling in his head. He had a moment of boyish youth.

Fragments of hilarious hopefulness jostled together in his mind, a confusion so different from his recent apathy that he could have struck his hands together in very joy. Before him stretched the crossing road. The trolley wire—the car of his destiny would slide along it sometime soon and bear him as it had never borne anyone else to the Land of Heart's Desire.

It was simple enough. He was among the missing, among those whose names would never appear in any belated list of the rescued and found. His coat had

burned; the porter had made a frenzied and unsuccessful search for him. He was reckoned among the dead.

Out in Chicago, in a vault, lay bonds for one million and a half dollars. He had gone out there—was it only last week?—on a project that was still hanging fire. He had needed to do it secretly lest publicity ruin the plan. He had taken practically all the cash with him; he had put it in a bank vault under an assumed name; he had been scrutinized and identified by the gray-coated keeper of the vaults as Gregory Holt.

Gregory Holt! He had thought of the name as one to serve a short purpose, and it gave him a new courage to reflect that it would be quite like fate to make him in an idle moment decide upon his future so unconsciously.

The whole future shaped itself in his brain in a sudden flash. There was no question now of Thorpe's "stringiness," of Mary's scruples. Hermann North was dead—in the course of time his wife and Thorpe would be married. In the meantime he would read of his dreadful death, of all the details of his partner's doings; and all the time he would be Gregory Holt, a millionaire, traveling about the wonder places of the world with—Elizabeth.

In his present acute clear-headedness it came to him that his worldwide acquaintance might quash the plan. And naturally, in the same strain, came his answer. Even Elizabeth had said he looked strangely like the new star—Dohan Junior. It would be enough to be naturally amused, to admit he had met the same situation before, to remind his protagonist that North had been obliterated in a railroad accident, and to go his way, unshaken even under the eyes of a man he had known for years. Even if there was a ripple in the smooth story, after many months it would soon die away. He was safe.

The weak point in all his calculation was Elizabeth. But his belief in himself blinded him at that point. He remembered her, half pale, half flushed at their interview—how long ago it seemed! Her long kindness meant something. True

he had promised her much that he could not now command. But a million and a half— And who could say that she might achieve her dream of conquest? She, as Elizabeth Arnold, with his experience and a fortune behind her, might go far on the highroad of success. For himself he had savoured that sort of glory—it meant nothing to him now. He had done with everything except the scintillating future of Gregory Holt and his wife.

It was all so simple and so clear to his sharpened wits that he laughed like a man who is mad.

He got up and searched in his pockets for a handkerchief. He found one and soaked it in some trickling water near by. He washed his face as if he were washing Hermann North from the earth's crust. He made what improvement he could in his toilet and waited impatiently for the car. Behind him, a couple of miles away, the glow of the burning train had subsided. The night was quiet. He hoped the car would come soon before some other uninjured folk from the train would conceive the idea of coming this way.

It came and he boarded it, with some amusement, in his assumed role of drunken loafer. He had carfare, however, and the conductor let him slump into the corner unrebuked. The trolley sang along the wire, taking him farther and farther away from the scene of the wreck. He gave up another fare in his seeming stupor, as the car passed into the city limits. He attracted no attention. Sunk in the collar of the overcoat, he apparently gave himself up to the fumes of his debauch.

But his mind retained that almost hideous clarity of vision and intention. The shock of the catastrophe had left merely a congested feeling in the throb of his heart and a physical heaviness in his head. He was mentally alert.

He would go straight to Elizabeth's. It would be late when he got there, so late that the last elevator boy would be dozing in the hall secure of not being caught napping. He would walk up the stairs to her apartment, he would explain to her what she was to do and he

would slip away again before the first vague hint of morning broke and board his train in secret. No murmur of what had happened could touch her. She was for the time being off the boards, and he was merely a friend, a managerial acquaintance.

As the trolley car rocked onward through the darkness, the conductor came in and went to sleep in a corner. It was great fun, in a boyish sense, to North, to realize the man's oblivion to the importance of his single fare. He drew himself closer even as he smiled. There must be no leak, no weak spot. Even this man must never have a shadow of suspicion. He let his hands drop at either side of his knees and relaxed his jaws. He looked very drunk. When the conductor called to him at the stopping of the car, he did not move. He yielded, like a partially empty sack, under the man's arousing hand. His eyes opened stupidly.

"Ye got t' get off, sport," said the conductor.

"Uh," said North.

"Beat it. I'm headed for coffee, see? Now come on." He caught North by the arm, and the latter swayed helplessly against his shoulder as he got to his feet. "Gwan," said the man.

VIII

ELIZABETH ARNOLD entered her little home with a sigh and a sense of peace. At last all the dreary muddle had been put straight. She reserved, of course, the thought that, in spite of her plans having gone wrong, in spite of the wrack she had brought into their lives, she had been right—so far as it went. She had got Dohan Junior his chance, his big chance, and she had thought to see her work finished before she would rest. It was not finished, but she had abdicated and he would finish it. She was sure of his public now. She laughed as she unfastened her jewels before her mirror. There might have been two of her at the play! She was so filled with the personal side of their lives, into which Thorpe had so quietly stepped, and yet one part of

her, even while her eyes had looked through their tears at him, had been so keenly aware of the genuineness of Junior's triumph. It had been like standing with one's back to Niagara, hearing the roar of its tumultuous reality, and knowing it would go on and on even while one walked away.

She dressed herself to look her best, set her little table in the dining room with her most precious glass and china, and laid Thorpe's third place with a daughter's tenderness. Through all the uneven beating of her heart that awaited the coming of her lover husband, she was conscious of a tenderness for the kindly, dignified gentleman who had so delicately appreciated the gentle part he had been called upon to play. She arranged the flowers on the table as she hummed a little melody.

She was still attending the possible needs of an already perfected table when a soft ring at the doorbell took her into the hall, her filmy gray skirts in her hand. In the doorway, a short, thick-set figure, with an attendant waiter, a couple of French ovens and a basket, confronted her.

"Mr. Thorpe," said the small figure.

She smiled and stood aside. "The kitchen is out there," she said. "What is your name?"

"Tashi," he replied. He was embarrassed, so she smiled in a friendly way.

"I've set the table," she said, "and I suppose it's wrong. But do the best you can. And send the other man away."

He smiled then, too, and disappeared into the kitchen; and presently she heard the waiter depart. She went to the pantry door.

"Tashi," she said, "have you everything you need?"

"I bring all," he said simply.

A little knot came between her eyebrows. She was accustomed to friendliness from her servants. But he stood, a placid barrier to her intrusion. She turned to go. "When the doorbell rings, Tashi," she said kindly, "I'll go. Don't you bother. I'll let them in. And when we want supper I'll come and tell you."

He had been interrupted in his artist's task of making a radish look like a sea serpent of the lobster family, and he half turned back to it as he acknowledged her command.

She turned and went away, half chilled with his irresponsiveness. She laughed at herself, that she should be on this night of all others susceptible to so outside an influence. But she had been used to adoration all her life, and a mere indifferent word chilled her as it might have stunned a child.

As she passed the hall door on her way back to the drawing room, she was stopped by a knock. She stood an instant, her gray foggy draperies held in one hand, one slipped toe in advance of the other, hardly touching the parquet. A curious sense of evil came upon her. She stood like a living woman being turned to stone. Her color left her face. And even while she felt her heart sink within her, she wondered at herself. She might have been a murderess, she vaguely thought. Of what was she afraid? And why? But she did not move.

The knock was repeated. Still she did not move. Her little clock chimed the "quarter to." It could not be Junior and Mr. Thorpe. They would ring, anyway.

It seemed to her as if a cold air had come in through a shattered wall, bidding her run away before greater destruction came. She shivered, and yet she made an effort to turn toward the door. If the sound she heard had been a blow upon her innocent head she could not have been more dazed. One hand against the wall, she turned and stared at the solid door. Was it mere stage superstition that had, so to speak, shot her down?

An hysterical procession of explanations rattled through her brain: it was a special delivery letter—someone had reported a pipe burst—it was the waiter with a forgotten plate. But, after all, whatever it was, why should she stand there trembling?

But while she did, staring at the door with wide, horrified eyes, the summons came again, impatient, imperious and

sharp. She gave one look down the dark corridor toward Tashi's place of operations and then, catching her breath in a sudden sane revulsion, went to the door and opened it, frowning. "What is it?" she said sharply. "Why don't you ring the bell?"

The figure outside swayed toward her. It was enveloped in a long overcoat, the collar turned up, the hat drawn down. "Let me in," said the voice.

A quick chill ran through her. "Mr. North!" she said.

"Let me in." He said it dully and heavily, and then, as she still hesitated, with a sudden menace that terrified her: "Let me in!" Half unconsciously she stood aside, and he lurched into the hallway and groped his way into the living room.

Elizabeth followed him, too amazed to be concerned, too surprised to be dictatorial. She stood in the doorway, holding the portières, wondering if it were better to send him home now by Tashi, shanghaied into service, or later by her husband and her friend. The sense of fear had deserted her. She did not understand, but she thought she saw through her scornfully half-closed eyes that he was drunk. It made her shudder, but she glanced swiftly at her little clock—Junior and his friend would soon be there. Junior would understand, even as he must now understand the part she had played for him and her sudden renunciation of all subterfuge.

North was calling to her in a thick, uncertain voice. "Elizabeth, come here." Reluctantly she followed him into the room.

Although he was standing facing her bareheaded, she would not have recognized him. His face, as set as a plaster mask, in an expression that totally altered the familiar features, was further disguised by a thick red flush that lay seemingly far below the livid skin. There were streaks of dirt upon it, and his hair was full of grayish ash. Utter amazement held her dumb and motionless as she looked at him.

"No one saw me come up," said North, who was slightly swaying on his feet. "I waited—I waited—Just a

moment. I have a great deal to say. There isn't any time—"

Elizabeth Arnold drew herself together forcibly and stepped toward him. "You have no right to come here at all," she said calmly. "If you had waited for your answer today, you would never have come again. It makes no difference that no one saw you come. I want you to go away at once."

"There's no use saying that." His voice was hoarsely impatient, and every word came with a visible effort. "It is all different. You don't know what I've come to tell you. Hermann North is dead."

She started, and looked quickly at him, wondering if she had heard aright. "Dead—dead," repeated the man, trying to speak so that she would understand.

"Do you hear that? Dead."

She put her hand upon the back of the chair near her, and her knees went suddenly weak. Then she sat down. For an instant her glance shot to the clock upon her writing desk, and then returned to his face. Help would soon come.

"How do you know that Hermann North is dead?" she asked quietly. "Who told you?"

He merely stared stupidly at her.

"Won't you sit down?" she added, her eyes fluttering away from him. Every nerve in her body was braced rigid, but she felt she could not endure while he stood over her, so tall and strange. But for a moment he did not move, looking at her blankly as if trying to understand what she said. At last a faint glimmer came into his suffused eyes.

"I see," he muttered thickly. "Thinks I'm crazy. You'll understand—so much has happened—" He paused and his eyes wandered. Then with a shudder he brought himself back to her. "I may sit down? Did you ask me to sit down? I may take off my coat? I don't know whose it is—it isn't mine."

Her hands gripped the arms of her chair. "Certainly," she said. "Take it off."

"Poor devil," he said—and then slipped out of the coat and stood revealed to her in all his charred rags.

She sat forward with a sharp cry. North tried to smile and passed his uncertain hands over his hair. "Don't be frightened," he said vaguely. "I'll tell you. I have so much to tell you. But my head is queer. Thick and queer. I'll tell you."

She had risen as he was speaking and gone toward him, but he stepped heavily back, and half fell into a great chair behind him. "No," he said, motioning her away drunkenly, "it's not that I want. That isn't it, either. Not your help. I want *you*." Then he lifted his eyes to her, and she saw another look in them, like that of a bewildered child. "I don't understand it," he said piteously. "I don't mean any harm to anyone. I want you—I want you."

As she stepped uncertainly back from him, stricken with fear and horror, he closed his eyes.

"But what is it?" she cried faintly. "What has happened? Your hands! Your clothes!"

"Happened?" he echoed dully, his eyes opening. "Oh, yes, she doesn't know. Everything's happened. Everybody dead. Heaps and heaps. Hermann North—they can't find him. But I'm alive," he said suddenly in a louder tone. "I'm alive; you're alive; I'm rich, and we'll go—" His voice trailed off, and his eyes closed again.

She stood motionless staring at him. What should she do? Call Tashi? Send for someone? This man was not drunk. He might indeed have lost his wits, but that was not all. Something horrible had happened to him.

He looked up again. "We'll go," he said, his voice coming more thickly than before, but as if there had been no interruption, "to Chicago—or was it St. Louis? No, Chicago. There's a fortune out there—belongs to me. Only—only I can't remember my name. Holt—that's it. Holt. Write it down Elizabeth—for God's sake write it down. Give me some water. No—don't. I haven't time. Wait, wait—curse it—I can tell you . . ."

She could not move. She watched him.

"Listen," he said. And again harshly,

"Listen! It's hard—I can't seem to—I can't—" He lapsed again, and Elizabeth, trembling in every limb, turned toward the door.

"I must get someone," she said, more to herself than to him, but his befogged wits caught the words and he made a futile effort to rise. "No, no," he said, and so urgently that his voice seemed clearer. "Don't do that. No one must see me. Oh, my God, come here!"

She came slowly back, her eyes wide. Something terrible had happened—yes. But what was it he had done?

"I want to explain," he faltered. One of his feeble hands twitched as if he would have made a fist of it and used it against himself, or as if he would beat away the deadly mists that were gathering about him. "I can't—I can't begin. I know it all but I can't get it together. It's clear—it's wonderful. And we'll go—but, my God, I never found the woman and the child!"

On the cry, his voice came out sharp and resonant like that of a man who calls "Fire!" in the night. His hands waved futilely in the air at either side of the chair he sat in, and then suddenly grasped the arms of it, rigidly, in spite of their lacerated wounds, and he dragged himself more erect. Some of the blankness left his face. "I'm sick, dear," he said simply. "I must have been hurt. I don't know. I can't tell you all about it now—there's something wrapping it up. But it's all right—if you'll only go with me now. I'll be all right. I remember now—we must go at once—at once—you know where—I told you. And my name—what did I say my name was? I never hurt anybody—it's all tommyrot, dear, about the divorce—but I'm dead now—only hurry, hurry!"

He seemed so sane, if incoherent in his weakness, that it forced the truth from her. "But I'm not going," she said, in her bewilderment and terror almost as incoherent as he. "I'm married. I'm married to Junior."

So still he sat that she wondered if he had heard. His face went gray; slowly, horribly and then swiftly that sullen flush beneath the livid skin rushed up-

ward, deepening, spreading, darkening, until his whole head seemed scarlet. He rose with a gasping sound, wrenched to his feet by that rising tide of blood; he took two steps, and tottered toward her, his arms raised in a convulsion of agony. As she cowered away from him, his face twisted into a bloated hideous mask of mockery. It grinned at her, while her reason seemed to reel, and then, with a gurgle that strangled in his throat, he pitched headlong forward at her feet.

His great, long body, falling like a tree, shook the floor on which she stood. And then she began to scream.

IX

AFTER Thorpe left the house, Mary North remained alone in the room, so long familiar to her and now strange and somehow dear because of the words that had, in that odd hour of their interview, charged the atmosphere for her with the sparkle of revelation. She might have been in a mood to reproach herself for the speaking of those true things which should ever be covered by lies, but she was only glad, glad in a measure that transcended prejudice, that she had spoken and that he had spoken.

For years she had realized her mistake, nor had she sought to justify herself by heaping blame of coercion upon her parents. She had agreed and she had married North, and even in the knowledge that Curtis Thorpe meant more to her than any other might ever hope to mean, she had persuaded herself that after their marriage—her marriage with a man she admired and respected—it would all be different.

It had been different, vastly, but not in the way she had meant. Her few first months of unavailing awakened regret had been followed by the dreams of motherhood, in which she felt herself so isolated that the man she had married shrank to a mere negligible quantity. From that time she had gone on, accepting in the name of her children the position she held in point of law. But as the acquiescence dwindled in the growth of repugnance, so grew her desire to be rid

of the disgraceful episodes that in her husband's life touched her children, in order that under a new arrangement nothing but her own integrity could reach them.

A serious woman, grown to be such from a pliant girlhood, she had spent something above a year in the contemplation of separation, and there was less of self in her determination than there was jealous love of her children. Perhaps out of her tribulation had been born the tardy recognition of her love for Curtis Thorpe, but she had not meant to include her own personal happiness in the change she was to make. Her attitude toward divorce, as she told Thorpe, was fixed and absolute. But she had been unable, in the urgency of that moment when he had spoken frankly to her, to withhold from him the honesty of her own heart.

So at least that was clear before them, or between them. They would never speak of it again, but she was glad it had been said. She had much in the love and lives of her children—he had nothing. Yet both of them, in the days of separation they faced so bravely, had this comforter, an ever present sense of the sweetness of the truth. It wasn't a great deal, and yet how much it was!

The striking of the clock, at half past seven, roused her. She gathered up her gloves and bag and went out into the hall, her eyes half dazed with the transition from the realm of dreams to that of reality.

The houseman, coming out of the dining room, met her at the lift, and ceremoniously attended her. She went first to her own rooms and from there to the nursery. "I haven't time to dress," she told her maid quietly.

Eileen was wakeful. She put one little slender arm about her mother's neck, as she, seeing the child's eyes glistening in the dim light, knelt down beside her.

"Nurse was cross," whispered Eileen, "'cause I wented down. But I had to."

"You had to go down, darling? Tell mother."

"Forp"—it had been the child's name for him ever since she could lisp the word

—"Forp said he was poor. Muvver, w'y didn't you tell me? I had four pen-nies in my old bank."

Mary held her closer in her arms. "Baby—my baby!" she whispered.

"I tookted vem down to give him."

The woman with her lips in the child's soft silken hair felt the tears in her eyes. "That was right, Eily," she said. "That was my sweet little girl."

"I touldn't explain to nurse."

"No, darling. No. Mother understands. It's all right. I'll tell nurse. Now will my baby go to sleep?"

"Ess," said Eileen in supreme content. She cuddled down in the sweet warmth of her bed, serene in a clear conscience.

Her mother's kiss on her lips, the child curled up, like a little kitten, in sleep. Mary knelt by the tiny bed, perilously near a breakdown. If a little child should lead them, was not this baby hand, so quick to both, striving to show the way? The little flower face so near her own, smooth in innocent satisfaction, offered her a vision of the wisdom that is too near perfection to know aught of sophistication. Thorpe was poor, and she had given him all she had!

She rose almost blindly to her feet. She had a supreme conviction, shared with many, that the promptings of her own self must be those of evil. She had been scrupulously taught that right meant the one thing one hated most. But she had taken an onward step in these last days. Not for her own sake—she told herself that again and again; and, to do her justice, it was true. She had done it for the children.

As she went back to her bedroom, she found herself reawakening to all that it meant. She found herself floundering among a mass of conjecture as to right and wrong. She remembered then what Thorpe had told her. And the question returned to her painstaking intelligence—what of this other woman?

Prosaically she moved about, washing her hands and her face and smoothing her hair, unaided by the maid, who had felt herself dismissed.

Thorpe might be wrong. But should she not, in her decisions, consider the

others? It would make no difference in her own life. She would not consider herself free. But these others—what might they not do—against their own standards, if she persisted in denying them what they considered freedom? Curtis Thorpe had not thought her desire to see the woman a wise one—yet! Who could say? There was a feeling within her, sharp and urgent, that bade her sweep aside all reservation and pretense, and to speak to this girl fairly face to face.

She suddenly went toward the little stand in her room that held her telephone, and sitting down, caught up the great yellow book of reference, intent on the name she sought even while her mind was alert on argument. She meant to leave tomorrow. Hermann North would return the next day. It would be impossible to treat the matter then as undecided. It would be out of the question, for her, to treat the matter then as one under discussion.

The resolve was taken, the step made, in that brief instant, as so many important untraceable steps are taken. She called up Elizabeth Arnold's apartment.

Miss Arnold, the maid informed her, had gone to the theater. She would be home about eleven.

Mary, who followed none of the workings of the theatrical world, did not know that Miss Arnold was not at the time appearing on the stage. But she knew enough, from long association with the ways of players, to know that the unconscionable hour of eleven at night was nothing more to them than five in the afternoon to those whose work lay on both sides of noonday.

"She won't mind my coming then," she told herself as she went down to her lonely dinner. "It can't wait until tomorrow. She'll think it odd until I tell her. But she will understand then. If it is her life, her future—yes, against all my determination I will set Hermann free. I shall not be free, but they must feel differently."

The hours between that silent hour of dining and her going forth she spent in walking the length of her rooms, setting forth in her own mind the things she

meant to lay before the girl. She was going on no weak errand of capitulation. She would show Elizabeth Arnold her side of the picture; she would do her best to make the girl see what she considered the better part. She might fail, but she was not going there for personal success. She was bound on an errand of enlightenment to a younger woman who might need a word of help.

It was eleven when she left the house, in a taxicab summoned to the door. She was in no feverish exaltation, nor in any vacillating nervousness. As calmly as she had ever gone into the house of a friend, she walked into the elevator in Miss Arnold's apartment and gave her name. She had not stopped at the desk, and the boy who ran the car seemed to feel that she knew her business best.

As she went down the corridor, and the lift dropped with all its light from her sight, she suddenly heard a woman scream. The cry was preceded by a heavy fall that she heard rather than felt, for the concrete floors of the building gave no vibration. As she paused, startled, the scream came again.

There was a door partially open on the corridor, and as she simultaneously recognized it as the one to which she had been directed and the one from which the cry had sounded, she darted down the hall and ran in. Some impulse made her close the door behind her, and call "Hush!" clearly but softly, and to add: "What is it? Don't be frightened. Where are you?"

The light in the front room drew her there, and the sudden silence following her words did not deter her hurrying steps. She saw first the long, wide, dark body on the floor, and the slender gray-clad figure standing near it. And immediately after her eyes unconsciously took in the room, the soft warmth which smelled of flowers, the gentle light that only half illuminated the place, the sense of well-being in the appointments, above all the refinement of the woman whose room expressed her.

The girl in gray met her entrance as if she had called upon a friend by name. She swayed toward her and caught at her. "Is he dead? Is he dead?" she gasped,

and her breath panted between her lips.

Mary North was suddenly aware that an undiscovered self had lain slumbering within her all her life. She would have expected to feel many sorts of fear and powerlessness in such a crisis. Instead, she found herself releasing her arm gently from Elizabeth's nervous, gripping fingers and saying calmly: "My dear, I'll see. I think not."

The girl let her go in a sort of shaking wonder. And Mary, kneeling beside the man on the floor, turned his arm and shoulder till she could lay her hand upon his heart.

She saw that it was her husband.

After a moment she rose and took off her hat. It was an incredibly strange thing to do, but she remembered it afterward. "I'll telephone a doctor," she said.

"Is he dead?" repeated Elizabeth, as if she had not heard.

"I don't know," said Mary North. "Where is the 'phone?"

Elizabeth Arnold stared at her, her fingers thrust into her hair at either temple. And Mary, after a second questioning glance, turned away. "I'll find it," she said, more to herself than to the other, and started toward the hall.

Voices outside the door and a ring at the bell halted her, even in that moment. A certainty that the woman's screams had been heard was in her mind, and a shadowy idea of the danger of refusing admittance. A word of reassurance was all that was needed now. Later they would know better what to do.

She paused at the door, summoning what calmness she could, for after her first dullness in the shock she found her rousing nerves beginning to shake her body. The first face she saw was that of Curtis Thorpe. And behind him was a man she vaguely recognized.

The strangeness of Thorpe's being there she did not grasp. He was the one being on earth she wanted, and he had come.

"Thank God!" she cried huskily, and drew him in with a hand on his arm. "I don't know what's happened. She

screamed. And Hermann is here. I think he's dead. I'm going to call a doctor."

The other man, brushing past them, rushed into the forward room. As she sought to turn from Thorpe he held her back. "No, Mary. Wait. I'll see to this."

He turned from her, shut the door behind him, and quickly put up the chain. Then he opened a door opposite, looked in and motioned to her to enter. It was all done so swiftly, so unerringly, that one might have thought he had been prepared for her astounding news.

He put her into the bedroom and extinguished the light in the hall, all apparently in one movement. "Wait there, Mary," he said, and she obeyed him.

The front room offered him a tableau he seemed absolutely to disregard, yet no detail of it escaped him. Dohan was standing near the door, gazing across the prostrate dark body at Elizabeth, who, with both hands held out to him at arm's length, swayed in the dim light like a wind-blown spectre.

Thorpe stepped across the fallen body and went to her. Slight as he was in physical frame, he picked her up bodily off her feet just as she relaxed into faintness, and held her up in his arms. He carried her from the room, well aware that Dohan made no move to take her from him, down a few steps of the hall and into the room where he had left Mary. He laid her as softly on the bed as his overstrained arms would permit, and turned on the light.

"Take care of her, dear," he said gently, and disappeared from the room again. He seemed to be the only moving being in a world of statues. Mary, however, quickly recalled by the sense of responsibility, moved forward after a moment of utter bewilderment, caught up the salts from the dressing table and slipped the pillow from under Elizabeth's head.

X

THORPE, being the only independently moving creature in the place, went out a moment later, leaving the body of Hermann North lying on a couch in the

library and not much more than the body of Dohan Junior standing in a window of the living room staring outward. Being a man of swift understanding, he had made no effort to engage Dohan's attention, not even when, to his own amazement as he half carried, half dragged North into the adjoining room, he beheld the charred garments that clothed him.

He lighted a cigarette in the elevator and remarked to the boy that it was growing colder, a fact in which the boy seemed to show little interest.

In the street he went along with a cautious quickness, having turned from the avenue into a quiet, dull street, watching the doorways and even the entire fronts of the houses as if seeking more a certain type of house than the first doctor's sign.

What he searched for he soon found. Indeed, he had been thoroughly sure of his locality. The house was dark, all except a dim light in the hallway, and after he rang the bell with a long, calm pressure, he had time enough to say his prayers before the door opened. A young man, who had grown a beard to add to his appearance of years, with an overcoat over his cotton pajamas, stood in the doorway peering out. Thorpe stepped in. The place was just what he had expected or hoped, dingy, poor but clean and respectable. Over his head hung a cheap gas fixture set with large glass jewels, that viewed itself vainly in a long ugly mirror where a derby of no startling newness hung sadly on a brass peg.

"I should like you to come at once," said Thorpe. "You are Doctor—"

"Frobisher," said the man.

"Ah, I saw your sign but couldn't make out the name. I think we have a death by apoplexy on our hands. Will you be good enough to come as quickly as possible?"

The doctor hesitated one instant. His eyes traveled rapidly over the man in all the elegance of evening dress. "Certainly. Yes, I'll get ready at once." It took him but a few moments to slip into his clothes, and Thorpe could hear the disjointed conversation between the hurrying doctor and his sleepy wife from

the conjugal chamber above stairs where the door had been imperfectly closed.

Doctor Frobisher ran down the stairs again, drawing the same coat over a different costume, darted into his office, caught up the inevitable black bag of the impecunious physician, took down the dusty derby hat and opened the door.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting," he panted.

Thorpe lost no time in reply, but stepped out. The doctor hurried down the brownstone steps at his side, pausing a fraction of a second for Thorpe to show him the way at the foot of the stairs.

"There's nothing much to tell you about the case," said Thorpe presently as they hurried along, "except this: that, while you are by no means being called into a questionable situation, it is one in which the utmost discretion is necessary—and I may say obligatory."

"Yes?"

"So far as I am any judge, the man—a client of mine, by the way—has fallen victim to extraordinary excitement following a mental strain of incalculable intensity. I am certain he is dead."

The doctor did not reply, but there was no slackening of his pace. And Thorpe was satisfied he had no more to say. Nor indeed had he. For the doctor's first uncertainty as to the kind of case he was being called to had utterly disappeared under an appreciation of Thorpe's personality and bearing. And he merely docketed the proceeding as a "case," and thought he understood wherein his discretion was necessary. Nor had he anything but pleasant anticipations concerning his fee.

In the apartment matters were unchanged. As a matter of fact, Thorpe had been gone an amazingly short time, but not realizing that, having been so occupied, he thought it odd to find them all as he had left them. The only difference was that he could hear a sound of weeping and the low, soft tone of Mary's voice, as they passed the bedroom door.

Dohan turned and glanced at them as they entered. His forehead was knitted closely into a frown. Doctor Frobisher, hastily following Thorpe into

the farther room, had not noticed the man standing in the embrasure of the curtains, but as they passed from his sight Dohan came forward and dropped into a chair, clasping his drooping hands between his knees and his head bent above the hard-pressed knuckles.

Thorpe turned up the electric light and switched on another in a wall bracket just above North's head. He took the doctor's coat and hat as mechanically as any valet and laid them on a chair.

"Good God!" said Frobisher. "What's happened to the man? He's been in a fire!"

"Your business at the moment," said Thorpe sharply, "is to find out whether he is alive or dead."

"He's dead," said the doctor positively, but turned nevertheless to taking measures of making certain. Thorpe watched him without paying much attention to what he did. His mind was busy with the distressing problem of the future and wonder at North's being there at all. He felt that all the responsibility for these four people lay in his hands, and was rapidly going over in his quick, clean, workmanlike brain the things that were next in order to be done, when he saw Dohan standing near him in the doorway.

Dohan's face was white and seemingly as hard as marble. There were rigid lines in it where there had been smiles an hour before. His eyes were brilliant, but not sparkling—they were coldly alive. "Your man," said Dohan in a low voice, "wants to speak to you."

Thorpe started. "I'd forgotten about Tashi," he said. "It will take me but a moment."

As he passed the other in the doorway, Dohan laid a curiously heavy hand upon his shoulder.

"If you please," he said slowly, "it will take you several moments."

Thorpe glanced at him earnestly. "But—"

Junior's fingers closed suddenly and he stopped. "If you please," he said.

Half rebelliously, Thorpe stared at him and then gave way. What could he do? Surely Dohan had a better right

there than he. And Dohan now looked like anything but a man who was not awake and alive to the exigencies of the case. Thorpe made a gesture of surrender and turned away.

Dr. Frobisher rose from his knees beside the body and noticed the change in his attendant companions. Dohan nodded to him. "Mr. Thorpe has been called out of the room a moment," he said quietly. "You see, we were going to have a sort of party here tonight."

Dr. Frobisher returned his nod. Then he glanced back at the man on the couch. "He's dead," he said shortly. "It was apoplexy."

Dohan shook his head sadly. "Poor chap," he said. "It's a terrible thing. I'm thinking most of his poor wife. They were married today."

"That's tough, isn't it? Who is he?" asked the doctor.

"Who is he?" repeated Dohan, astonishment in his tone. "Don't you know who he is? Why, he's Jerry Dohan—Dohan Junior—the actor, you know. Why, your name will be all over the paper tomorrow, man! He made a great hit tonight—opening night on Broadway."

Doctor Frobisher's eyes opened wide. "Dohan!" he said. He turned and looked again at the dead man. "Why, I've seen him. I saw him in Bridgeport. I thought he was a young chap."

"Yes—that's make-up," said Dohan. He thrust his hands into his pockets and jingled the keys and change drearily.

The doctor turned to him again. "That's the limit, isn't it? Is that his wife I hear crying?"

Dohan withdrew his hands from his pockets and passed them over his head. "His wife is in the other room, yes. With a woman friend of hers." The temptation to hurry the man was like a driving devil at his side.

"But what's the matter with his clothes?" exclaimed the doctor, looking back again at the figure stretched before them.

Dohan was prepared for this. During Thorpe's absence he had done more than Thorpe suspected. "That's just the worst of it," he said slowly. "We

came up here to celebrate, you know. Sort of double celebration." The words seemed as if they would stick in his throat, but perhaps, because of his long training on the stage, subconsciously he spoke them with so much feeling that the counterfeit rang true. "It was the maid's night out and we thought we'd cook up a supper ourselves. Something—I don't know what—went wrong with the damned gas range, and his clothes caught fire."

Dohan pressed his hands together behind him and prayed for strength. "I suppose it was the excitement of that—for a minute or so it looked pretty bad. I think it must be more awful to be closed in by fire than anyone can imagine."

"Yes," said Frobisher sincerely, "it's a tragedy."

"It's a tragedy," said Dohan.

"Of course the rest of it played its part," said the young doctor. "I've never seen a first night; I've never even known an actor. But I guess it's pretty fierce. And getting married the same day!"

"Yes," said Dohan, and clasped his hands behind him until they ached. A low sound of a woman crying came to them.

"There's nothing further you can do?" said Dohan.

"No. Oh, no. He must have died almost instantly. I'll make out the papers. I'm afraid I've kept you."

Dohan's hands unclasped. "I suppose we ought to get out as soon as possible," he said. "Here's a desk."

He waited in an agony of impatience and fear while Frobisher filled out his certificate of death, giving his name again to be sure it was correctly written in, and listening every instant for the sound of Thorpe's returning footsteps.

As the doctor finished, he took out his wallet. "I'm going to ask you, as a favor to—his wife, Doctor, not to give out any interview about this. It will be bad enough, anyway."

Frobisher nodded. "Sure, I know," he said. "The papers will love this maid-wife-widow headline. I wouldn't think of adding to what they'll do, anyway."

Dohan took the coveted document, half wondering at his own control in not snatching at it, and gave the doctor a bill of one hundred dollars. Frobisher's color rose at the sight of it, but he tried to pocket it calmly.

"We won't forget this, Doctor," said Dohan quietly. "A discreet man is a man in the right place. It's all I happen to have about me now, but I'll send you a cheque."

"It's more than enough," said Frobisher.

"No, no. It's a late hour to drag a man out. Good night."

The doctor put on his coat and gathered up his hat and bag. "Good night," he said, and quietly let himself out to tell the good news to his wife.

As the front door closed, Thorpe came out of the dining room and hurried in to face Dohan. The gray light of morning was coming in at the windows, and the streets were growing noisy with the early traffic. Thorpe drew together the portières that separated the room from that in which North lay dead.

"Well?" he said shortly.

Dohan faced him, his face as gray as the light of the morning. "It's all right," he answered. He held out the certificate for Thorpe to take and read, and as the other took it from his hand moved away and walked up and down the room.

Thorpe opened the sheet and glanced at it half puzzled. "Jerry!" he cried. "My God, boy! What have you done?"

Dohan swung around on him sharply, and his words came short-clipped and quick. "I've done what I want done, Thorpe. I've spent a lifetime since we came in here thinking this thing out. This is Beth's home, and there's only that way out. It had to be me. Thank God, she married me today!"

Thorpe fell into a chair, holding the paper in his hands. "But you can't do it! You can't do it!"

"I've done it," said Dohan savagely, standing over him. "I've done it for her. And you have had no hand in it, and it needn't lie on your conscience. Or, if it does, I don't care. Good Lord, what is

your part in it? It concerns me—and only me.”

“My boy, you haven’t considered—”

Dohan broke in upon his protest. “I’ve considered every inch of the way. There’ll be enough talk as it is, but it won’t be as bad as it might have been. There’ll be a great fuss over me—night of my triumph, and all that rot. But there’ll be no fuss over the funeral, nobody there. You’ll arrange that. And Elizabeth will go away—what more natural? Only she’ll go with me, and I’ll take care of her. No—stop. As for that man in there, I don’t care how the public accounts for him. I don’t care about that. And that’s all there is to it. Except his wife—I’m sorry about her. But even she is better off than she would have been. And that’s all,” he repeated, “that’s all.”

Thorpe stared at the certificate in his hand, and then slowly rose and laid it down. “I’m sorry,” he said quietly. “I’m sorry, Junior. I can’t have anything to do with it.”

“You haven’t got anything to do with it,” said Dohan fiercely. “Or, if you think you have, rip it open and let all the scandal out on these two women. If those are your scruples, I’m glad I haven’t got any.”

Neither of the men had noticed that Elizabeth had come to the door of the room and was standing there, listening. Behind her was Mary North with one arm about her.

“It’s illegal, I dare say,” went on Dohan. “But you didn’t do it. And I don’t believe you’ll find any points of law on a man burying himself in another man’s place. I’m seeing this thing through. The only sacrifice we make is mine. My job is over. I’m dead. That’s all. I’m dead.”

Elizabeth Arnold gave a sort of cry and came suddenly forward into the room. “Junior!” she gasped. “Junior—what have you done?”

He put his arm around her and she felt him shaking. But his voice was firm. “I’ve done the only thing I could to save you, Beth. It wasn’t your fault, all this. I know that. But what you began innocently enough, I’ve

finished, innocently or not as you please. But it’s done.”

“But you can’t do it, Junior!” she cried. “Your career that I—”

He silenced her by turning her face against his breast. He seemed to have forgotten the other two people in the room. “I’ve told you, Beth,” he said gently, “that it was all wrong. I told you that, until you were willing to go out into the woods if need be with me, you didn’t love me enough. I can take care of us, Beth. You need not worry. I’d give my own life for your name, dear, and I’ve only partly done that. Will you go with me, Beth, and start over again, somewhere else, at something new?”

She could not answer him, but she clung to him, sobbing. It seemed to be the only answer that he needed.

Mary, white and trembling, her face lifted, was asking Thorpe quick, short questions to which his replies came accompanied with gestures of despair. He turned at last to Dohan.

“You must listen to reason, man,” he said. “I’m sorry. But, Miss Arnold, won’t you please sit down? We must talk this over. Junior’s idea—”

“It’s not an idea—it is a deed,” interrupted Dohan quietly, as he put Elizabeth gently into her favorite chair.

“It’s no deed of mine, Junior. Have you thought, for example, how you are going to get out of here—how we are to account for Mr. North’s being here and not being here? Have you considered—”

“Wait, wait,” cried Elizabeth, her tumbled hair about her face, her head in her two hands. “I remember he said no one saw him come up.”

A flush darkened Dohan’s face, but he managed to say calmly enough: “Then so much the better. I can get away in an hour’s time before anyone sees me.”

“You are stark mad,” said Thorpe. “What about Mary? She has certain rights in this matter. What about the estate?”

Mary laid her shaking hand on his arm. “Oh, Curtis, as if I cared about that! We can manage that some other time.”

"In short, you choose to agree to this stupendous absurdity?"

"I'd rather, Curtis. Think of the children!"

"But you are here yourself."

"Yes, but—but don't you see? I came alone, and the boy saw me. He'd think I came here—knowing."

"The devil is in it," groaned Thorpe. "For God's sake, Miss Arnold, what does it all mean?"

"I don't know. Oh, I don't know. Junior!"

Dohan put an arm around her as he sat down beside her. "Beth," he said, "listen to me. It is true that in the first moments of horror I was utterly struck down. But if you fear now that I don't know you were as amazed as all the rest of us, you are unnecessarily torturing yourself. But you must help us now. Try to remember what he said, what happened. Pull yourself together, Beth. We can't leave any point uncovered. Did Tashi see him?"

"No; he rapped on the door and I let him in. He was—at first I thought he was drunk, he was so strange."

"Try to remember what he said, Beth. What did he want?"

"He wanted me to run away—with him. Oh, Junior, I don't know half he said. He was incoherent. He said he couldn't tell himself, but he knew. He said he had thought it all out, but he couldn't 'get it together.' He looked terribly. He said his head was 'thick and strange.' I thought he was crazy."

Dohan looked at Thorpe a moment in perplexity, and then back to Elizabeth's bowed head. "Go on, Beth. Try to remember."

"I am trying," she said piteously. "He said Hermann North was dead. He said he had plenty of money—somewhere. In Chicago—yes, that was it. He told me what name he had. I don't remember. He said: 'May I take off my coat? It isn't my coat; I don't know whose it is, poor devil!' I don't know what he meant. But I saw his clothes all charred and I wanted to get help. I prayed for you to come."

Thorpe, in the brief pause, said sud-

denly: "I know. I have it. Something happened to the train."

"What train?" snapped Dohan.

"He went to Boston this evening—last evening," said Mary faintly. She still leaned in the doorway white and weak.

"He called out all of a sudden: 'But I can't find the woman and child,'" said Elizabeth. She broke down again, crying uncontrollably in Dohan's arms, her head against his breast. "I was afraid, boy, I was afraid."

"Don't cry, Beth. Don't, girlie."

Mary North had come forward behind them and laid her hand gently on the girl's hair. "Let her cry, Mr. Junior," she said softly. "She's been through a terrible ordeal."

Dohan glanced at her gratefully. "Please sit down, Mrs. North," he said. "I've been shamefully thoughtless of you. Why, where's Thorpe?"

"He went out for a moment," said Mary wearily. She sat down facing Dohan and the weeping girl. "I want to tell you that I think you have done the best thing for all of us, Mr. Junior. But—but have you really considered the sacrifice you are making?"

Elizabeth started up in his arms. "No, no, you mustn't do it, boy!" she sobbed. "I can't have it."

Dohan drew her to him again. "You can't have anything from now on, Beth," he said whimsically, "except what I give you. We won't speak of that part of it ever again."

She lay moaning in a heartbroken way, physically spent.

"Now we must consider what we are to do next," said Dohan presently.

"I'll take her home with me," said Mary North.

"Yes, that's best." He spoke slowly, weighing the future. "I'll get away at once—from the city, I mean. I haven't quite planned that yet, but I'll let you know, of course. I can't be seen here anywhere. Perhaps I'll go to Canada—I'm not known there. Or England. And as soon as the talk is quieted you can bring Beth to me."

"I will," she answered quietly.

"It's better for us all," said Dohan, his eyes on her, and making a gesture

toward the clinging girl, "not to talk about it, not to try to thank each other, not in any way to keep the sorrow and horror alive with us."

"You are right," said Mary.

"Else I should try to tell you how magnificent you have been, you see."

"It is better that none of us should speak of it," she returned, a bit unsteadily.

Dohan drew Elizabeth to her feet. "Then will you 'phone for a taxicab, Mrs. North, and help this poor child into a coat? You can arrange afterward about her clothes and things. Just get her away." He walked with her to the bedroom, keeping between her and the drawn portières. "Dear Beth," he whispered. "Be brave, my girl. We'll be happier in a new life than we should have been here. You must leave that to me." She was too utterly weary to reply.

As he put her into her bedroom, Thorpe let himself into the apartment. He held an early morning paper in his hand.

"There's only one thing more to be done, Thorpe," said Junior. "We've got to get me out of here and you must stay."

"That much is easy," said the other. He took Dohan by the arm and drew him into the living room.

"Where's Mary?"

"She and Elizabeth are getting ready to go to her house."

"She can't get there too soon. Look at this."

He spread the front page of the paper to Dohan's gaze. The headlines covered nearly half the sheet. Like hysterical ejaculations they announced the horrors of the wreck. One black scream

held the name of Hermann North, and the word "missing."

"You were right, then," said Dohan.

"We'll never know the whole story," said Thorpe. "He must have seen his chance to force the freedom on Mary that he wanted for himself. He got here somehow—probably already dying. It was Miss Arnold's refusal to go that must have ended it."

Dohan stared at the page and laid it down.

"It's a very strange thing," he said slowly. "But it simplifies—this."

"It does," said Thorpe. "Only it will be on my conscience till I die, as it is."

"How will you keep people out of here?"

"Easily. 'Mrs. Dohan's illness' will do that."

"And the papers?"

"I'll give them a watertight story—conscience or no conscience," said Thorpe. "I've got to see you through now. Call on me for money as you need it."

The bell rang softly in the bedroom, and they heard Mary's voice speaking through the telephone. "Very well," she said.

"It's the cab," said Thorpe. "I'll send the boy on an errand to the drug store. You can all get away."

He put out his hand and Dohan took it staunchly. "Good-bye, my boy. I'm sorely grieved tonight. But God bless you. Somewhere ahead there may be happiness for you—for you and Beth."

"Perhaps for all of us," said Dohan gently.

"Perhaps," said Thorpe gravely; "as you say, perhaps for all of us."



WHEN we come to pay the fiddler we sometimes find that we have been dancing to the strains of a whole orchestra.



PRUDERY—The all-season resort of the untempted.

THE SONG OF THE WHEAT

By C. L. Marsh

I DRAW my birth from the Mother Earth,
The matrix of all that lives;
The sun is my sire, his passionate fire
The life to her offspring gives;
He woos her and warms her in lusty way,
But he tempers the heat of his dusty day
With the rain that he sends from the soft southwest,
To quicken the seed in her mighty breast.
Then the grasses grow and the wild flowers blow,
And the world begins to sing;
But I am the heir to this royalty fair,
For I am of life the King.

From the tropic glow to the lands of snow,
The whole world waits for me;
No wheel can turn, no thought can burn,
Till the giver of life they see.
No whit I reck of the claims of birth,
No wealth is my standard of greater worth;
To the favored few, and the struggling mass,
I am "Necessity," scorner of "Class,"
For where is the race that will calmly face
The loss of the life I bring?
And man is wild when the moans of his child
In his ears forever ring.
When "Bread" is the cry, let the rich man hie,
To scatter the food that his wealth can buy,
Or beware of the hunger that will not die,
For I am of life the King.

And woe to the fool who fancies to rule,
My freedom to come and go!
No wealth is so great as the laws of fate,
And I bury him 'neath my snow.
Perchance he is called "The King of the Wheat,"
For a season of sovereignty short and sweet,
But from all the earth with pinions fleet
I fly, on his insolent head to beat.
No "King of the Wheat" is he, I trow,
But the Wheat is the monarch that lays him low.
One bungler more I add to my score,
And again my song I sing:
No power can stay me, no trusts betray me,
For I am of life the King.

"STRONG WOMEN"

By Louise Closser Hale

"AND these three young women are now dead?"
"Yes."

"Then how could you paint them?"

"They had been my models when they were living. I had a hundred sketches of them. When I returned to Etaples and found what had happened in my four years' absence, still I painted them—as I had planned."

The guest in the studio turned to the other man quizzically. Ordinarily the painter found amusement in the ragged, uplifted eyebrow of his ever-doubting friend. Today he returned the formless query with a definite one, veiling a tendency toward emotion, perhaps, by a more vigorous passion. "Do you criticize my taste?"

The eyebrow of the visitor descended. "Not for an instant, my dear chap," he apologized. "Why shouldn't you paint three strapping fishergirls, arms linked, work done, and the sails of their men's boats behind them? I don't criticize anything, but what amazes me, what confuses me, is your title."

"'Strong Women'?"

"Why, good Lord, yes. I admit it was a tragedy to come back and find them gone, but isn't it rather comic, rather grimly comic, to give such a name to a picture of three girls already snuffed out like candles at bedtime?"

The host sat down by the side of his guest in the second chair that stood at a properly adjusted distance before the picture on the wall. A small tabouret with whiskey on it was between them. Behind their backs the fire on the hearth burned dully; the light of the late afternoon was not more bright, and it would seem that the glowing warmth of the

three girls on their wind-swept quay gave the light needed to show the excellence of the work.

"Is it a story?" pursued the visitor.

The host shook his head. "No. That means a beginning and a plot and an end. There wasn't any end to these girls. As you say, they were just snuffed out like candles."

He relapsed into moody silence as he stared at his canvas. His friend prodded him gently. "Go on. I want to hear, and I think you'll feel less blue when you get it off your chest."

"Perhaps so. The thing's just been unboxed, and the day's foggy, like Etaples in November, so it all comes back. There isn't any beginning, either, when it comes to telling of them. They are just three fishergirls on that cruel north coast of France, and no one could call that a fair start. They were yanked up somehow, and before they would be old enough to make beds in America, they were wading out in the biting waters of the channel for crevettes. You've eaten those little shrimps, of course? They cost ten cents a bowl. Oh, no price at all. No price, that is, for us, but the girls pay. They wear a sort of woolen stocking reaching to their short knee-length skirts, just as you see them now, but their feet are uncovered, and they must go out in all kinds of weather if the market is to be supplied. 'Makes 'em strong,' I've heard tourists say. 'Fresh air cure!' Well, I don't want to betray my anarchistic tendencies—I'm back here to sell pictures to the rich—so I'll go on."

"This girl is Renne, the one in the right hand corner—your right hand. You see that wave of hair? It belongs

to her family; every one of them has it. And I'll say this much for Etaples morals: you don't see the wave in any family not of that name. Even so, the fisherfolk don't look at society as we do, although they have standards. For instance, the light-o'-love does not exist, and, sooner or later, the young people marry each other. As they ought to do, you say? Well, of course, but it doesn't always turn out that way over here.

"It's the parents who are to blame, I think. They would rather have two or three little nameless tots around the miserable house than lose a daughter who brings in crevette money. As soon as a girl marries, what she makes goes to her husband. Sometimes, to be fair to the 'old 'uns,' the man is saving up for a boat, and doesn't want to take her right away.

"But that wasn't the case with Renne. She had an admirer, and the mother thought him rather a catch, but the girl would have none of him. She began posing for me in the autumn, and as we grew better acquainted she had a good deal to say on the subject. She flouted the thought of him, called him the Monkey, and gave imitations of his attempts at love making.

"When the fishing fleet made its way down to the open sea and on to Newfoundland, she knelt with the other women of the village upon the sands, and told her beads for its safe return, but no candle of hers burned among the hundreds of others before the pitying Christ. She had few sous for the Monkey.

"The year was well over, and Renne had come many times to my cottage with the skylight set in the roof before I realized that she would soon be unavailable for correct studies of 'the young girl.' I'm rather a duffer at such discoveries, and didn't hear much of the gossip of the village. I knew that she had been very happy all winter, just as any gleeful child of sixteen is happy, and, student though I believed myself, I had not detected lovelights in her merry eyes.

"But one day my *femme de ménage* boiled over into confidences—the after

effects of a *fête*—and on that same morning my model appeared with eyes too red and lips too white for a fisher lass—on canvas.

"Things went on that way, and finally she gave me the whole story. Not the name of the man—oh, no fear! She would guard that with her life, but tales of the rage of her mother, beatings, and of threats to send her out crevette fishing again. 'And me as I am,' she concluded, in the old way.

"This state of affairs poorly agreed with the general complacency of Etaples parents, and it was from my *bonne*, my bad *bonne*, that I learned more of Renne's sweethearting. He was not of the village. Rather she had taken unto herself a tiller of the field. Now a farmer does not follow the custom of the fisherpeople—this invariable custom of marrying his inamorata at some—early or late—period. And to avoid any resentment on the part of the men when they returned from the Grand Banks, he quitted the poor country of Pas-de-Calais for the richer soil of Normandy.

"Renne never saw him again, and she grew dragged and white with the burden she carried. Her mother was for bundling her out in the street to let her do for herself, but with some spare coin, and many threats of the priest, I managed to pacify her.

"I don't know what the end would have been had not the fleet returned—not all of it, in spite of the candles—but, by chance, the Monkey—saved for a purpose, perhaps. He heard the truth, you may be sure of that, at the edge of the quay, but he still wanted the girl. Of course you'll say this was noble, but he *was* an ugly thing, and Renne detested him. However, it was out on the pavement that night, or off to the priest's, and to the church they went.

"I saw them pass my door, the Monkey grinning, Renne with her full lips pressed into a thin line, no wreath of smiles or any other wreath for decoration. She wore her little black dress—but I'll tell you more of that. So on she went, one man by her side, another in her heart.

"After she had returned to her

mother's home, and he was being toasted in the café, I took occasion to step in there myself to treat them all around. The fishers were already sufficiently muddled for me to have well saved my money, but that I did so was occasioned by the intense satisfaction of the bridegroom. He was swaying about in the middle of a group of comrades, and his speech was such that I understood the import of the compliments that had preceded it. For the Monkey was assuring his companions, with much sly digging of fist into ribs, that, while his indulgence was of a true greatness, still it had been only by his absence that the child of Renne had another father than himself.

"Renne heard of it. The boast was told her at my very door by my wretch of a *bonne*. She was a plain girl who had always felt the worm of envy gnawing at her flat bosom. I peered from my bedroom window, for I was just up, undecided between the use of the razor or the jug of boiling water as punishment for the gossip. It was Renne's magnificence that arrested me. She was for the time unlovely, but the old flush came back into her cheeks and the fire into her eyes.

"'A husband, yes,' she cried; 'but a lover—no, by God!'

"There isn't any more to tell about her. I went away, and when I came back she was dead. The baby, for whom she had found a name, had lived but a year, and after that she had lost her grip. The Monkey had kept her at the crevette fishing through one winter, and, besides, she didn't care to live, I fancy."

It was the guest who filled his glass from the decanter on the tabouret. The delicate clinking of the action turned the painter toward him humorously. "I'm like the Ancient Mariner holding up the wedding party. A cheerful person! You don't want me to go on, do you?"

"Rather. I didn't care to speak. Something's in my throat, anyway. But what about the little black dress?"

The host crossed his knee, and clasping his hands over it, tilted back and

forth as though attempting to lighten the moment. Then he pointed to the picture. "It's the second one, that lusty one in the middle. That's Coralie. I don't know where she got the name; it doesn't belong to the people of Etaples—and, in a way, she didn't. You understand, by this time, that these fisherfolk are as great slaves to conventions—their conventions—as we are to ours. In the interest of law and order some of these formalities had been laid down by the Church. That is the wondrous thing about the Roman Catholics: if they can't overcome certain immoral proclivities of a community, they hedge them about with circumstance.

"The priests don't approve of these delayed weddings, but they can't stop custom, and the best that they can do is to lay a premium on goodness.

"I suppose that there isn't a woman on earth who wouldn't like to be married in white. I believe even the Hottentots would instinctively choose it if they chose anything, and in France—well, you have only to observe the wedding parties in the Bois to appreciate the value they lay on veils and orange blossoms. The wise old Etaples priests recognize this soft appeal, and they have made it a rule that no girl who has loved and lingered long in marrying shall wear a bridal wreath. They must all wear black. Black is their punishment, black their badge.

"Wonderfully enough, they obey the mandate. When I was there little black processions to the old church were not extraordinary things; no one stopped to sneer, and all was as it should be. But how those girls loved white! How they would gather along the sidewalks when a white wedding went down the street! How they would admire the bride—talk her over in whispers!

"I often wondered why some one of them didn't cheek it through and wear the vestal color. In fact, I wondered about it so much that I wonder now if I could have 'put the thought' on Coralie. I hope not. Anyway, as I have said, she was something like her name—different from the fisherpeople—

less subservient, more daring. Have you ever noticed the Coras in life? Well, watch out for them, that's all I have to say.

"Oh, don't misinterpret me—she wasn't a bad sort. She had a sweet-heart, to be sure, who was waiting for her, but she also had a mother who was keeping her in the wretched hut with a big family of brothers and sisters for the sake of the crevette sous. Look to the mother when it comes to Etaples wrongdoing!

"As it happened, there was no little toddling thing to ask who the strange man was who called upon '*ma mère*'—which is an Etaples joke of long standing—and perhaps this stroke of luck made Coralie continue to play with fire. Even so, I couldn't believe my ears when she confided to me, the while turning a defiant red (a lovely color which I madly transferred to canvas), that she was going to be married, and she was going to be married in white.

"Any demonstration of astonishment at this announcement would not savor of gallantry, so I did my best to conceal my surprise, and at Coralie's imperious: '*Eh bien, pourquoi non?*' I had to confess that I didn't know 'why not.'

"That was where Coralie had them, or thought she had them. There could be no specific charge against her; there wasn't any, she maintained, and besides that—her face yearned as she spoke—she wanted a white wedding.

"She wanted a stiff little wreath of orange flowers; she wanted a wedding cake; she wanted to walk proudly through the town, and proudly into the strangeness of her man's house. She wanted, God help her, respectability.

"I don't know how it got about that she was letting the tucks out of her white communion dress, and freshening up the coarse net veil. Perhaps it came as a surprise to the village, but I am inclined to think that they were ready and waiting. I admit that I pedaled up to Boulogne for a wreath of orange blossoms and smuggled it to her, so I was, in part, responsible for what happened afterward.

"She was married on a *fête* day, which

was unfortunate, as the men are home then, full of bad liquor, idle, boisterous. As no models would come to me on a festival, I had left my cottage and was wandering on the quay when the wedding party passed me. I heard it first, rather than saw it. Or, I should say, I heard one shout of ghoulis glee, then another. Cat calls followed and a shrill whistle—a boatswain's whistle—which brought the men tumbling from the drinking places. Before the girl and her lover had turned into the broad way, before I ever caught a glimpse of the white communion dress, let down, and the veil of her youth under the stiff wreath, the shouts had merged themselves into one concerted gibing, hissing volume of sound.

"Then I saw Coralie. Her head was still high, although the glorious color that had attended her when her ambitions soared had quitted her. It was evident that she would brave it out, but fear stalked with her as unexpected guest.

"The bridegroom slouched along shamefacedly, endeavoring by sidelong glances to accept the jeering as a rough but friendly jest. Her girl acquaintances who had started from the house with her were turncoats at the first hiss. The family had no time for weddings, so I, alone, made up Coralie's entourage. And, somehow, we gained the church.

"This was sanctuary, and if the blind, deaf old priest appreciated the purity of her gown, he certainly did not the situation. The ceremony was concluded; they stubbed their names into the registry—the Book of Sighs they call it—and dully accepted my congratulations.

"I doubt if Coralie heard any of my speeches. She was looking beyond me, driving her mind where she must soon drive her body, along that quay which lay between the church and her new home.

"They were waiting for her, and they had not been idle while the girl was becoming a white wife. Missiles were in their hands: decayed matter, filth, fish from the refuse of boats. Had there been stones there would have been some dignity in the pelting.

"The couple ran, they dodged, they doubled. The husband deserted her altogether, or at least became separated from her. They let him go—he had outraged no law. Some of the other painters and myself tried to stem the tide, but it was as merciless as that which sweeps their harbor. There was no anger, I say it again—it was the gibing that made the hour so mean.

"She made some headway when they stopped to fall upon the veil which had been torn from her, and each clamored for a sprig of her orange flowers. The girls were shrieking with the men, and I thought, thickly, of the knitting women of the French Revolution around the guillotine.

"It was just then that she turned into the street leading to her haven. Poor Coralie! Her head was down, at last; her smutted robe of the hue that her community, who held to convention, would have it. But at the door, even as the knitting women were in my mind, she turned upon them:

"*'Vous êtes tous des scélérats!'* she screamed, then disappeared.

"You know the phrase? 'You are all rascals.' Yes, but do you know who said it before her—at least once before? It was Marie Antoinette. It was Marie Antoinette to the people—the foolish, imperious, heartbroken queen."

The artist rose and kicked a log into flame. Coralie's gay face flashed out with the light of it.

"She seems too splendid to have died," said the guest.

"She did though—within the year—I was told. In spite of that last cry, her persecutors were too much for her—as were Marie Antoinette's. But the execution of Coralie was more prolonged."

There was some casual exchange between the men, as though each skimmed over the surface of the other, but, after the first pause, the teller of the story continued with his "task"—he now called it. "I didn't know it was going to be such a dismal affair; but you've got to know—if nobody else ever does—why they are Strong Women to me.

"The last one is Amie. Her grave is very recent, still bare, adorned with a bead wreath of flowers which the painters put up. They hated the sight of the thing, but Amie would have loved it, and she didn't have many things her way.

"No sweeter, sounder girl ever grew up in those ill-smelling streets than she; no better daughter, no kinder mother, no more loving wife—if she had had the chance to prove it. Her man was a fine fellow and crazy about her, but her father was a paralytic, her mother ailing, so Amie had to contribute to the family fund and couldn't marry. She had two children, and how she managed to keep those young 'uns tidy, mind the house, pose for the artists, and fish for crevettes was more than my lazy *bonne* could explain to me. But she did it, and would have looked after my domicile besides had not my own shrew threatened to cut out her heart.

"Amie wanted money, for they were saving up to buy a share in a boat, and when the income from that would begin to roll in there would be enough to keep the old folks as well as buy the wedding ring. An old black gown was bliss enough for her.

"When I went away I gave what I could to help out with the fund, and I wished I had been a woman that I might read her a lecture on the stupidity of being happy over a coming third baby. But she was happy, particularly so, she assured me, in extenuation of her joy, because the coming third would be born in wedlock. 'Since monsieur has made this possible,' she concluded ambiguously. So I left her, sure that the flutter of tragic wings which must have filled the dreams of Renne and Coralie were far removed from her mild presence.

"One of the fellows told me of her when I came back last summer. Perhaps it will give you an even more vivid impression of the formality of this fishing village. Mind you, she had borne two children, yet was loved and respected; but in a twinkling, in the snapping of a rusty gun, in the whiz of a bullet, she fell to the level of a woman of the town.

"The gun was fired by a farmer at an enemy whose custom it was to walk in the darkness of the early night from Paris Plage to Etaples. He shot to kill, and his one mistake lay in the picking of the wrong man. It was the man of Amie who was found in the roadway with dust in his mouth. In his pocket was the ring that he had gone to Paris Plage to buy, and at home Amie was mending her black dress for the wedding the next day.

"Sympathy for her, did you say? Well, yes, of a kind. The village wished to crucify the farmer. It was bad luck for the girl, all agreed to that. But custom held them in its grip. One moment she was worthy of esteem, with children and a lover who would surely marry her, and the next moment found her a woman with fatherless ones, who, by curious chance, must remain so forever and forever. Instinctively the women flirled their short skirts aside, and Amie went among her people an outcast."

"And she let herself die, too?" broke in the voice of the listener.

"No, by the Lord! That is where she is glorious. She put the ring on her finger and she kept her marriage certificate, unsigned, against her heart. When the third child was born she gave it the name and surname of his father, although

no priest would baptize it so. I heard that on the day of his birth she rose and waded out for crevettes.

"She did everything to feed herself and five feeble mouths. Her father drooled; her mother heaped reproaches; her children wailed that they must play alone, shunned by the others. But she kept at her tasks with that dumb, unintelligent straining that prefaces defeat. She wanted terribly to live, even as an alien among her people, for the sake of those five whimpering humans."

The visitor banged his hand upon the tabouret, and the glasses jingled among themselves. "Don't say she didn't live!"

The painter laughed at his violence, but his laugh was bitter. "I've got to say it. I'm talking about the fisherwomen of Etaples. The 'white plague' got her, as it does the rest. Too much 'fresh air.' On the day she died she went out to the sands—it was in December, too. She fought to the last."

After a little the guest prepared to go; an appointment was made for dinner, a cigarette was smoked, but before he left the two stood once more in front of the picture.

"Yes," said the artist musingly, "I had intended to paint them that way, and so I did. I don't find the title amiss, although their great bodies were, after all, frail."



HUMAN

By Richard Burton

WEIGHED down by grief, o'erborne by deep despair,
 She lifted up white arms to heaven and prayed
 That day for death; she made a mighty prayer
 Beside her dear one gently to be laid.

And standing thus, it flashed across her mind
 How she must make a seemly silhouette
 Against the sky, her figure sharply lined
 Upon the westering sunlight, black as jet.

THE FELLOWSHIP OATH

By Ernest Starr

FROWIN wandered without purpose into the solemn, quiet woods. He came upon a beaten path and fared a noiseless way over trodden turfage made by the old year's russet leaves. The sound of voices came blithely through the trees. He waited, and soon he saw advancing a lady accompanied by two maidens. As they drew nigh Frowin knew that the lady was richly beseen, young and passing beautiful. Her brownish hair hung in two braids down across her breast. She wore a saffron-colored gown of so fine a texture that its folds lay close about her form. At her waist was a heavy girdle cunningly embossed with golden figures.

Frowin sought to catch the words she spoke to her maidens.

"And so," she was saying, "when He was twelve years old, He went with Our Lady and Saint Joseph to the chief city of the people, and there they kept the feast. And when Our Lady and Saint Joseph made them ready to leave, they could not find Him. Then they searched a great while, and at length they found Him in the temple. Our Lady was greatly surprised and she—" The speech ended in a little cry as Frowin stepped out into the path.

"I did not mean to frighten you, lady," he said.

For a moment they faced each other silently, and Frowin knew in his heart that this was the loveliest lady he had ever seen.

"Roska, my lady, let us draw aside!" said the foremost damsel in alarm.

The lady's head was high, and in no manner of fear she spoke to Frowin: "What do ye here, sir?"

"I wait for my comrade, Garnum,

who has gone into the township," said Frowin, abashed.

"Why went ye not with him? Why hide ye here?"

"I wait because—because—" and Frowin was at a loss. Then he spoke on: "I am here for no evil purpose—that ye must believe."

"Of your purpose I know nothing," said the lady slowly. "Your companion goes toward the camp; you bide here." A while she looked on Frowin coldly, questioning. "I fear you are—a spy! Since war has been decreed, your kind may be expected!" Then the lady Roska's eyes turned from brown to narrowed, sparkling black.

"Nay, that I am not!"

"You are from the North? You have the look," said Roska, searching his face closely.

"Yea."

"From Ragnar's court?"

"Yea—"

Whereupon the lady laughed scornfully.

"—but I have not seen the lord Ragnar nor any of his men these three months!"

"Belike!"

Then Frowin thought that if the lady had seemed fair when first he surprised her, now was she in her anger as shining as some white, god-knowing Vala.

"Your words betray you!" cried Roska. "So, for three months you have gone ahead by order of your king; and now you have spied out my father's lands! I hold a spy as cheaply as I would a traitor!"

Still Frowin heeded not that he was being handled by a woman; heeded nothing but his desire to see a gentle

look of favor in the eyes that blazed upon him.

"Lady," he said, "three months ago I left my lord Ragnar deep in sorrow over the death of Hwitserk, his son. For a private reason I left his court, and set out with a new-found comrade on a faring of adventure throughout Denmark. What Ragnar has done since I know not. I did not know that there was war." He held out his open hands. "I am no spy!"

Now was Frowin's heart in his eyes and likewise in his speech. As his words rang out Roska softened, and wrapped her eyes in kindness.

"I think—I shall believe you," she said, as she took a step away.

"Do not go!" said Frowin.

"It is not meet—" began Roska.

"I would speak with you," broke in Frowin, "if it please you."

A while the lady hesitated; then she waved back her maidens and turned to Frowin.

"I am Harald's daughter," she said; "and now what is your word, sir?"

Another time the proclamation of such lineage would have assured his quick and positive withdrawal, but not so now. Suddenly Frowin was dumb; for never had he looked into eyes like these. Deep as Mirmir's Well they seemed; pure as the Urdar Fountain. The lady waited; and Frowin's mind was thick as porridge.

"My name is Frowin," he said at length; and then: "Will you not sit and lean against this tree?"

Roska smiled as though at some thought that laughed out as it passed. Then she sat between the buttressing roots of a great tree, and Frowin threw himself down at her feet.

Ere he was aware, he was far into the story of his journeying through the country. He told of his life at Ragnar's court, and of his blood relationship to Ragnar. Then she was free with her interest, as though she might put off her impressiveness of rank with one whose blood was passing noble. Her eyes were lighted up with pleasure in his tale.

With further urgency she made Frowin

proclaim that which he would leifer have passed over: the strength of his allegiance to his king. He feared that when he told her of his will to fight for Ragnar, she would flit away like some singing tree-thing that hears the searching hiss of the huntsman's arrow. Yet she did not. It was done so manfully and truly that the daughter of Harald could not take it amiss. She looked upon him sadly, and the friendly light that late had shone out from her eyes was clouded over.

The flow of their speech was checked, and a long silence fell between them. Frowin waited heavily for her word. She toyed with a smallish golden cross bound to her girdle by a metal chain. Restlessly her fingers ran along the links. She folded her hands about the cross, and looked out solemnly at Frowin.

"You are Ragnar's man; I am Harald's daughter," she said thoughtfully, "and when Ragnar comes you will fight against my father. . . . Well, a man must do the thing he thinks is right."

"Not against your father so much as against—" and Frowin checked his word-flow.

"Ah, you mean my religion! If you could know how beautiful it is!"

"Odin and Thor have been our fathers' gods," said Frowin.

"But our fathers did not see the light!" Roska cried out gently.

"The Æsir are my gods," Frowin maintained.

"I shall beseech the Blessed Virgin to intercede for you," said the lady, smiling softly.

"Pray not to your gods for me!" spoke Frowin.

When he saw that his vehemence had grieved the lady Roska, he added: "Lady, we are of one blood, of Denmark. We differ in our minds on two accounts. Let not our difference touch our hearts, for I would be your friend."

"I thank you, sir, for your good will. I give it back in kind."

"My lady Roska!" Frowin cried out, softly hopeful.

"Yet do not mistake me, sir, for it is most likely that we shall not meet again."

"I do beseech you—" began Frowin.

"Nay, you are of the old religion; I am of the true. You are Ragnar's; I am Harald's."

"We are young, and times abruptly change," pleaded Frowin.

"Go your way, Frowin my lord, and know that you have given Roska both pain and pleasure," Roska said, and shrouded close whatever thought that might have blazoned in her eyes.

So the lady rose and bowed low before Frowin. Then she called her damsels and fared back along the path.

Frowin watched as long as he might see the saffron gown glinting among the trees. Looking down at the seat she late had held, he saw the cross of gold and knew that she had dropped it there. He pressed it close against his lips, and treasured it because it was the lady Roska's.

II

WHEN the sun had set Garnum returned with knowledge that lifted Frowin's heart aloft. Garnum had found the camp of Harald full of a great anticipation, for word had been brought by swift messengers whereby it was known that Ragnar and his army were less than a day's march distant. Then they determined that they would present themselves to Ragnar with the offer of their swords. Early in the morning they were ahorse, riding toward the road along which the king would advance. Once there, they waited but a brief space, when they heard the metallic murmur of the approaching army.

On came the horde of glistering helmets, Ragnar leading. Then Frowin and Garnum offered themselves before the king. Ragnar made them to advance with the warriors until the army came to a stand near sunset. The companions appeared within the king's tent, Frowin with an accounting of his earlier departure from the court, Garnum with the offer of his battle-proven sword. Ragnar made the two sit at meat with him that night, and looked again with favor on young Frowin.

Ere the dawning next day, before the warriors had risen to draw them up in

battle array, Garnum awakened Frowin and urged that they two should have speech at once. Frowin rose and followed Garnum out beneath the trees. There Garnum spoke with Frowin as tenderly as one stout warrior may speak with another. He said he knew that Frowin would win fame in the battle to be fought that day, and he believed they could both do weightier deeds if there existed between them the fellowship oath of death. Frowin needed no urgency; so swore they the oath, the foster-brother compact. They mixed their blood, and therewithal smeared each the forehead of the other. With their hands tight-clasped, they swore deeply, one and the other.

"By thy side will I fight; thy kin will I protect; thy honor will I guard. Parted or together, when thou diest then will I die also: by the faith of my body and the gods of my fathers, I swear!"

For a long moment they gripped hands, and then they went back silently to the camp.

The army marched out, and Ragnar the king drew up his men. Before he gave the order to advance, he bade the Danes remember their ancient glory and adjured them not to let it be assailed by a treacherous people, false to Denmark's gods.

Then the trumpets sounded, and both sides engaged in battle. The sky seemed suddenly to fall upon the earth, fields and woods to sink into the ground. All things were confounded, heaven and earth mingling in one tempestuous turmoil. The intolerable clash of arms filled the air like thunder. The dust hung as a mist across the sky, and daylight was hidden under the hail of spears. When the missiles were all spent, they fought at close quarters with swords and mighty iron-shod maces. The sweat streamed down their weary bodies, and the clash of swords could be heard far in the distance.

Frowin held him foremost in the battle, and always he and Garnum were close together. Skalk, the bravest of the enemy, did Frowin drive to the earth with a Frode-like stroke of his sword. Near the end of the fighting Frowin came

upon Ragnar surrounded by the Sleswik men, and weakening under their onslaughts. Then, using every trick of swordcraft he knew, Frowin forced his way through that penthouse of interlocked shields and put to rout the assailants of Ragnar. As they fell before him, Frowin called upon the name of Thor and exultingly cried out the strength of all the Æsir.

At last the men of Sleswik suffered great defeat. Harald had fled, and no company of the enemy strong enough to resist was found in the land. Ragnar entered into Harald's township and tore down the late-built temple to the new faith. The relics and carven forms he scattered on the earth, and put to the sword those of the priests who had not fled. Ragnar let cry a proclamation whereby the new faith was outlawed, and all men were called to revere as of old the mighty gods of Denmark.

At the same time the king sent out a band of men to destroy Harald's dwelling, and take captive his daughter, the lady Roska. Howbeit the warriors could find no trace of her, the which filled Frowin's heart with gladness and a great unrest.

Late into the night mead-drinking and revelry held sway. Frowin bore his part, but his heart was not in it. His sight was darkened as he thought upon the lady Roska. He was beset with fears. He could not bear to think of her tender wanderings through the woods, her fearful avoidance of blastments she knew not how imminent or perilous. He drew apart from the banquet table, and paced up and down before the king's pavilion.

His thoughts were broken in upon by Garnum, who had followed him out from among the feasters.

"This likes me not," said Garnum.

Frowin said nothing.

"When the fighting is over, then I am ready to go elsewhere to wage new battles," went on Garnum.

"You are truly the adventurer," said Frowin, faintly attentive.

"Yea, new scenes, new people, and always war!" cried Garnum. "What say you that we two go away to Perm-

land, in search of new undertakings? The Perms are always warring."

For a space Frowin was silent, and then he said: "I will speak with you of this another time; now my mind is torn."

Frowin put his arm on Garnum's shoulder and made for the feasting room. When once they were in the midst of the noisy drinkers of mead, he slipped away from Garnum and sought the outer solitude. Within, the battle-sated warriors were belching forth great tales of prowess and of lust; without was Frowin pacing silently. In his heart he held the piteous memory of a face: a wan and pleading visage with eyes as deep as Mirmir's Well; a beseeching, urging face whose gaze now turned aside, then darted back at him as though it saw some grisly terror, and prayed that he would come and ward it off.

So when the king departed from the mead hall, Frowin followed and talked with him in private. Thereafter he sought out Garnum and told him of the lady Roska and her present need, and of the winning of the king's permission that he might go out and succor her. Then parted Frowin and Garnum, and, hands begripped, they solemnly repeated the foster-brother oath:

"Thy kin will I protect; thy honor will I guard. Parted or together, when thou diest then will I die also: by the faith of my body and the gods of my fathers, I swear!"

Then they exchanged the silver rings that both had worn upon the thumb as amulet, and each promised that with his last breath would he give direction for the sending of the ring to the other, so that he might know the time had come for the fulfillment of the oath.

III

At early dawn Frowin laved his body in a rippling stream, and girding a bundle to his saddle, he mounted his horse Dulfari. To Harald's Woods he fared, and there he found grim ruin. The house was leveled and fear seemed to cling to the very soil. He searched

the humbler dwellings for some timorous slave to give him tidings of his lady. The place nigh chilled his hopeful-beating heart, so he set out and pricked him through the woods along the most distant way from camp and township.

He chose a towering oak that stood upon a ridge, and took it for a central point, from which he rode in circles ever greater, his eyes keen-watchful for a saffron gown, his ears alert for any human cry. At the furthest spot he yet had reached he found a piece of cloth, torn and caught upon a tree, a piece of saffron cloth! He laughed out joyously and cried, "Roska, my lady Roska!" His voice was borne back grayly from the distance, and there was no other sound.

Then he was sorely grieved; but his heart was young and would not long be bowed. He sang; and now the echoes trooped back gaily, for hope was high in Frowin's breast.

Through the covert alleys of the forest Frowin rode, among lined-up columns of great trees whose clustered foliage shut out the nooning sun. Ever he called the name of Roska, or sang a song that might give token sure of friendliness.

Toward evening he came into a part of the woods where the trees grew up less compactly. Now the rays of the sun penetrated more inwardly and he rode through broad yellow gashes of light.

Ahead he saw between the trees a stream. He was further heartened, for he doubted Roska would have thought to tempt a crossing. He called out cheerily the lady's name and held him still to listen. He heard a rustling on the sward, and a sound, half sigh and partly moan. Forth from behind a tree the lady Roska stepped.

"For God's love, sir, protect me!" she said piteously.

When she had looked more closely, she said: "Are you really Frowin?" She laughed weakly, as were the reliefment from her loneliness and fear so sudden that she might not be herself at once.

"Frowin!" and after a space again

she murmured, "Frowin!" Then she lifted up her face and her lips moved fervently.

As though bewitched, he sat still on his horse, his eyes ravening on the lady. Then he sprang to the ground and went speedily to Roska.

The forest fear was in her face. She was pale, her gown torn, her hair unbraided and disheveled on her shoulders, her mantle dragging on the ground.

"My lady!" Frowin said, and kneeling kissed her hands. "I have come to guard you."

Roska's eyes were great and tender-shining. She lightly touched his brow. Her bosom heaved, and her lips moved in speech that Frowin did not hear.

They passed on to the river shore, and Frowin spread his coat down for a seat. Roska breathed in the gentle air, and seemed to relax into a restfulness of being that late she had not known.

She would not tell him all, but the thought suggested by her speech more than once sent Frowin's hand to his sword. He drew nearer to her as he thought of her sore need and bitter helplessness during the night. The sacking of her dwelling, the battle-drunk assailants, their mead-besmirched indifference and desire, Roska's separation from her people, her flight and lonely wandering through the grim woods—the thought of it all ravaged Frowin's mind grievously. He deemed it passing marvelous, and therewith offered up his thanks to Odin that he did find her now, safe—and quite the same.

Roska made great moan over the rasure of the temple of Christ, but her father's safety gave her pleasure. Frowin thought it was a part of womanish perversion that she could take pleasure in her father's flight; nay, more than feminine fault: it was a baneful result of her strange religion. Even a woman, were she of Danish blood, should know that a warrior may not flee; he must die. If he die on field of battle, were he doubly fortunate, for he would be borne thence by the Valkyries to ineffable Valhalla. But Frowin kept him silent on these thoughts, because he had resolved that of their differing religions

they should never speak. On this he was as fixed as in his body-sworn oath that he would live and die in loyalty to the Æsir council. Aye, live and die! He would live, but why think now of dying? Odin had not pointed him out for death on yesterday's battlefield, therefore Odin meant that he should live—live and love!

Hands clasped about her knees, Roska sat and looked along the glimmering path of the great crimson sun where it shone on the river. Her shoulders drooped and her face was passing sad. Frowin wondered if he might tell her now to what length he desired she should depend on him. He broke in gently on her thought.

"Whither go we, lady, from here?"

"When I began to wander," she said, "I did hope to go to Eidre, where my uncle dwells. I thought there would be peasant huts along the way."

"Eidre? That is far distant."

"Yea, three days south from us."

"Well," said Frowin, "we are far afield, but perhaps we shall win it yet within that time."

"Will you take me there?" spoke the lady joyfully.

"Of a certainty," and Frowin grew to tingle under the scrutiny of her grateful gaze.

"Ah, you are good, and passing good! But it will take you far from your own ventures."

"I have no other ventures, Roska; and if the journey but keep me close to you it is enough."

The lady's face seemed colored like the sheen upon the sunlit water, and Frowin knew that the moment had come for his deep-hearted speech.

"We shall fare to Eidre, and you will find your uncle. And, lady," his words coming soft and slow, "when we reach the journey's end, will you—wed with me?"

A space the lady held her peace, her eyes fixed on a bird that dipped its breast into the water far up the stream. Then she turned her joyous face full on him and breathed a tremulous "Aye!"

Frowin's body quivered like a riven tree as he kissed her on the lips. They

watched the sun sink splendidly into the river source. A breeze ruffled by, and the water sparkled as though it held myriads of feathery jewels. The clouds piled up across the west a gorgeous curtain fit to hang before Valhalla's gate.

IV

LATER Frowin plashed four hedges of birch, and with his sword cut beech and oak boughs with which he made a roof; and within he spread a couch of hemlock.

When they had eaten of the food from Frowin's pack, he took the lady Roska by the hand and led her to the pleached bower. At the door they stood and spoke their first good night. When she had entered into the bower Frowin drew his sword and laid it bare athwart the door.

He strode back to the place where they had sat, and there he bided, looking up and whispering to the stars. He could not sleep. He treasured up his joy, recalling all the little things that went to make it. His dreams flew on apace. He remembered other loves that he had seen, and knew that none was like his own.

Frowin was up betimes in the morning, striding his way through the dewy grasses. At the bower wall he called to his lady, and told her that he would go on further down the stream to seek out better pasturage for Dulfari. So Roska came out and had the whole forest for her tiring room.

When he returned Frowin found the morning meal spread upon a stone. To his supply had Roska added berries, gathered in the woods and set forth in a basket made of interwoven leaves. At one side sat the lady Roska, fresh and laughingly demure.

Soon they started on the way. Roska rode on the horse and Frowin walked by her side. His eyes were ever searching out her face, and each look he gave was as a soft caress. Their speech flowed on apace and their heartsome laughter rang out through the stately trees.

The sun's glare seemed forest-tem-

pered to their mood. But once in all the day was their sky clouded over. It happened at the time that Frowin spoke of Garnum. Roska had espied the silver ring on Frowin's thumb, and learned of the exchange with Garnum. Frowin told her of the heart-regard he bore his comrade, of their parting and the renewing of the compact.

"That was rashly done!" said Roska.

"What mean ye, lady?" questioned Frowin.

"The oath of death!" and she repeated the words as Frowin said them: "Parted or together, when thou diest then will I die also!"

A late-sprung wind sorrowed through the tree tops. Roska shivered and pressed her hands against her heart.

"Where is he now?" she asked.

"He spoke of journeying to Permland."

"He goes there to fight?" persisted Roska.

"Aye, he is a warrior adventurous, and always doing battle. He will join him with the warlike Perms."

After a silence Roska spoke on musingly: "Permland; that is far away. Tidings travel slowly, and the fact of a single warrior's death may never come at all." Then she smiled wanly, as though this one dim thought outbalanced all her present happiness.

"Not so, dear lady. You shall have the truth from me always; like as I promised him, so Garnum swore to me that were he wounded sore and dying, his last breath would be instruction to a messenger who would bear the amulet to me. When I receive it, then will I fulfill the oath."

"Frowin!" cried out Roska painfully.

"Ah, dear heart, have no fear! The gods are good. They led me through that mighty battle and brought me out unscathed to you!"

"Aye, ye came through safe."

"I was not marked for the Valkyrie ride. Are not our gods reasonable? You see, they do mean a happy life for you and me!" Frowin spoke out joyfully and laughed, until he saw a look of doubt in the lady Roska's face. "I should have said *my* gods," he added.

"Yea, *your* gods," said Roska gently.

"Roska, are your gods less kind?"

"Kinder far; all love and seemliness! Ah, Frowin, if you would only—"

"Nay, lady, we may not speak of that," said Frowin, firmly kind.

The lady looked down at him earnestly and pleadingly, and Frowin was at a loss for words. For lack of speech he began to sing. It was the Lay of Ygdrasil.

"An ash know I standing
Named Ygdrasil,
A stately tree sprinkled
With water the purest;
Ever blooming it stands
O'er the Urdar Fountain."

Frowin made much cheer, and soon was his lady heartened. Again they two laughed out merrily.

They bided the night at a yeoman's hut, Roska sleeping in a cleanly furnished room, Frowin on a pallet spread without her door. The next day and the next they fared on through the country, and in late evening of the third they won the township Eidre.

Now the lord of the country thereabout was Broder, own brother to Harald. He held much of the land as Harald's underlord; therefore was he much beholden to Harald and to Harald's blood.

At the gate of Broder's wide pavilion Frowin called for admittance. When those within heard Roska's name, the gates were opened. Broder and his wife, the lady Thora, made great joy of them, for they loved Roska above all their kinspeople; and all that was in the power of Broder was at their commandment.

Straightway Frowin had speech with the lord Broder. When Broder understood that the love between Frowin and Roska was passing great, that the lady's father had fled no one knew whither, and that Frowin was of the king's blood, he gave his consent to the suit, acting in Harald's stead.

Then in the morning the high feast was made ready, and Frowin was wedded to the lady Roska with great solemnity, according to the rites of Odin. Broder agreed with Frowin in holding faith to the old religion, though many of the

people were turning them to Christianity. But Roska sought out a priest of Christ, and by him also was she wedded to the lord Frowin.

Broder put at their disposal another dwelling of his own, removed a space without the township. Thither were sent followers and slaves against the arrival of their new lord and lady; and after the feasting Frowin and Roska fared them out to the abode.

Before the door of the pavilion they stood and watched another sunset. From their feet stretched wide meadows and tilled fields. Near the house was a grove of oaks; beyond lay the forest. Down into the distant trees sank the throbbing sun. Frowin looked upon Roska, his eyes great and luminous.

"I love you dearly, Roska," he said.

"Aye, Frowin," spoke Roska, in the close circle of his arms, "love me well, for I am your own."

So they entered into their dwelling.

V

MORNING found the lady Roska culling flowers in the meadow, and Frowin seeing to Dulfari and setting in order the duties of the slaves. Soon they sat at meat, and then they went forth hand in hand to search out their possessions. A radiant day it was. Now they were silent, and now flowed out from their eyes and lips and hearts their passing love of very love itself. They laughed, and asked not reason why. Iduna was never happier than they!

So passed their early wedded days, all radiant and unclouded. Roska dealt out tasks of weaving to her women, and established about her, in so far as it was possible, the order of her earlier home. Frowin at her urgency joined in the hunting trips of Broder and his men. When they two parted in the morning with caresses, then met they with redoubled jealousy of love at eventide.

Sometimes he found his lady seated with her women, telling them the story of the Christ, and softening all their hearts toward the new religion. Then Frowin made no comment. Always

tender-gleaming was Roska. If fear lay heavy on her heart, leaden, weighting fear, she gave no token when her lord was close at hand.

Once Frowin tripped when he entered the dwelling. His face went white, for the saying was that ill awaited him who stumbled at his own doorway. Another time did Roska in her sleep cry out and make great moan; but of the dream she would not speak a word, despite Frowin's pleading.

In the day was Roska always bright and active, and very gentle toward Frowin. If Frowin saw her eyes hang on his face with strange intentness, he put it down to love. Yet all the while her color slowly dimmed; her movements grew more restless and distraught.

On occasions when great store of game was brought back from the hunting, Frowin and Roska fared them in to Broder's dwelling to attend upon the feast. There they found much merriment, for then all of Broder's thanes gathered to partake of his cheer.

It befell upon a night when Broder and Thora, Frowin and Roska, and all the company were making merry at such a feast, that there came into the hall a messenger bearing tidings to the lord Broder. He had ridden from the North, and his message concerned the country Permland. The Perms had usurped upon the Skanians and done great battle on them, so that many of the people on both sides were slain.

Then the lady Roska cried out shrilly, and, fainting, clung to Frowin; and Frowin bore her thence to their home.

A week passed by, wherein between the two was a tenseness of constraint, a passionate stillness withal. However, Frowin forced his mood and sought to cheer his lady, her eyes held on their piteous dullness, and she did always seem to listen.

In the evening of a day when the rain had been falling gently, Frowin came up to the pavilion. He heard within an unusual cry of voices.

Roska was calling harshly: "Give it to me!"

"Indeed, lady, I may not," returned a man's voice.

"To me, I say!"

"Lady, I may give the token only into the lord Frowin's hand."

Then Roska spoke in smoothly subtle tone: "But I will pass it to him!"

"Nay, madam."

"Then ye shall!" cried Roska. "Jatan! Feng!" said she, calling to the house slaves. "Bind this man!"

Then Frowin entered the room. Roska started and sank down trembling to a seat. She looked up white and fearful.

"Frowin, my lord—" she began.

Frowin by a gesture silenced her. He dismissed the slaves with a motion of his head. Very straight he stood, and in a dead voice he spoke to the stranger: "What would ye, sir?"

"I come from Permland," said the messenger, "from him that was lord Gar-num. This he committed to me with his last breath, that I should bear it to ye."

Therewith he gave Frowin a carven silver ring.

Frowin looked it over like one examining an uncouth emblem. He called a servant and spoke, aloofly courteous: "See this messenger well cared for."

Still gazing at the amulet he knew so well, Frowin sat on a bench near the lady Roska; and silently they looked at each other. A thundering sea of thought washed through his brain. He saw his life as if it were a floating bit of thread yet to be wound upon a spindle in completion of the task.

At length he said: "Roska, you understand?"

Then Roska made great moan and cried out: "Dear lord, it cannot be! Frowin, say it may not be!"

"I did swear by the faith of my body and the gods of my fathers," said Frowin deeply.

Roska dropped between his knees, and laid her hands on his face. "What oath is that?" she said. "The faith of your body is mine, and the gods of our fathers are disproven!"

"Roska!" he cried, and gripped her by the wrists.

"It is true! The gods are dead! The oath is void!"

"Woman, Denmark's gods do live, and Odin sits in Hlidskjalf!"

Roska broke her hands from his grip and clasped them fervently about his neck.

"But come you to my faith," she said beseechingly, "and your oath will be absolved!"

Frowin answered nothing, the while he held her close.

"You are mine!" called Roska, sobbing on his breast. "Break your oath! Live, Frowin!"

Frowin said between his pallid lips: "Is my oath nothing to you?"

"Nay, nothing!"

"You do not think that I might break the fellowship oath of death? If so, you do not know me!"

Roska shuddered, and sinking in his arms, she said, "Ah, too well I know you!" and wept on brokenly.

"Now speaks my love!" said Frowin.

"But not today, my lord? Let it be tomorrow! Tomorrow!" plead Roska, and pressed her lips on his.

Frowin lifted up Roska and laid her gently on a couch. She covered her face, so that she did not see him take from the wall whereon his arms were hung a sword, rich and fair, with edge of trenchant potency. He placed the weapon at his side. Then he took the lady in his clasp, and held her breathlessly, as though he would sap out her heart and take it with him far beyond.

"My Roska," he whispered, "I have loved you well. You have been my life! I go to a strange, far place, but there as here I shall love you always."

When he passed out of the dwelling the rain had ceased. A rainbow hung across the heavens.

"The Æsir Bridge," said Frowin wearily. "Across the Æsir Bridge fare the mighty Æsir to Valhalla!"

Frowin went on further, into the grove of glistening oaks.

"Now, Gar-num," said he, "is the oath fulfilled. Ye Æsir, all ye gods, accept me!"

He drew out the sword, and placed the point against his breast, and then he heard the footbeats of one running quickly. It was Roska speeding across the meadow, her garments flying, her hair blown all about her. Frowin drew

far back the sword, and turned his gaze on Roska. Like a maddened thing she flashed on nearer, nearer. Now she sprang across the ditch, and now she entered into the grove.

"Frowin!" she cried.

Fearing in his heart to look on her longer, Frowin called out his lady's name in passionate longing and farewell, and then let drive the sword with all his

might. He fell upon his face, so that the earth drove in the sword unto the hilt.

"Oh, God, be merciful!" moaned Roska, as she bent above him. With all her strength she turned him and held his head close against her breast. A little cross of gold fell out from Frowin's garment, and it was wet and red in part.

"My lady!" murmured Frowin.

And so he yielded up his life.



HOME-COMING

By Norreys Jephson O'Connor

FOAMING, the bright brook flew
Down the deep glen I knew,
Over the hills.

There 'twas my wont to float
Many a tiny boat
Over the hills.

Bearing sweet words of love,
Brought to a quiet cove
Over the hills;

Where sat a little maid
I met when once I stray'd
Over the hills.

Too soon the dreaded day
Came, when I marched away
Over the hills.

Years now have come and gone:
Long since the wars are done,
Over the hills.

Past where she used to dream,
Swift flows the sun-bright stream;
Over the hills.

What if black hair be gray,
When Love has led the way
Over the hills!

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

A LITANY: CANTO VII.

From Euckenism, and from women who leave everything to your honor; from men with waists, and from the Book of Revelation; from clear soups, and from the sacerdotal melodramas of Charles Rann Kennedy; from the college spirit, and from B flat clarinets; from bungalows, and from German cooking; from converted actors, and from actors; from sulphate of quinine, and from *pediculi*; from virtuous chorus girls, and from over-affectionate wives; from the lascivious arpeggios of Arnold Schoenberg, and from Boston baked beans; from chivalry, and from laparotomy; from the prehensile piety of the Hon. William Jennings Bryan, and from the comic supplement of *Harper's Magazine*; from women who say "I'm surprised!" and from those who actually *are* surprised; from sabotage, and from trained nurses—good Lord, deliver us!

EUGENICS—The theory that marriages should be made in the laboratory; the Wassermann test for love.

MORE WORSTS:

The worst loser—The Confederate States of America.

The worst sport—Snoring.

The worst nuisance—Cabs.

The worst town—Boston.

The worst hobby—Whiskers.

The worst joke—Marriage.

The worst vice—Reading the New York *Evening Post*.

The worst *wurst*—*Cervelatwurst*.

THE CALENDAR of Raves and Rages in the Woman's Clubs:

- 1896—{ Ibsen
- { "In His Steps"
- 1897—Maeterlinck
- 1898—{ Theosophy
- { "Cyrano de Bergerac"
- 1899—{ D'Annunzio
- { Ping-pong
- 1900—{ Tolstoi
- { Osteopathy
- 1901—Race Suicide
- 1902—{ "Parsifal"
- { The Peek-a-boo Waist
- 1903—Christian Science
- 1904—Parlor Socialism
- 1905—{ Trial Marriage
- { Deep Breathing
- 1906—Fletcherism
- 1907—{ Pragmatism
- { The Cigarette
- 1908—{ Sexual Hygiene
- { The Emmanuel Movement
- 1909—{ The Subconscious
- { The Hobble Skirt
- 1910—{ Paper Bag Cookery
- { The White Slave Trade
- 1911—Bergson
- 1912—Eugenics
- 1913—{ Eucken
- { The Montessori Method.

PUNISHMENTS That Fit the Crimes:

Katzenjammer.

Bryan.

Twins.

THE Homeopaths—The medical Shuberts.

PROPOSALS for an Eleventh Commandment:

- a. Thou shalt not get caught with the goods.
- b. Thou shalt not tell on a lady.
- c. Thou shalt not cheat, nor beef, nor cry for mercy.
- d. Thou shalt not blush.

THE ETHICS OF A GENTLEMAN:

1. Play all games according to their rules.
2. If you are licked, shut up.

HISTORIC conundrum of Roy McCardell: Do married men make the best husbands? Amendment of the eugenists: Do husbands make the best fathers?

SURGEON: one who discovers the family doctor's error in diagnosis—and takes the blame for it; also one who takes the patient's watch, chain and underwear.

ALL women, soon or late, are jealous of their daughters; all men, soon or late, are envious of their sons.

SOUL MATES IN HADES:

Mrs. Eddy—Cagliostro.
P. T. Barnum—Sarah Bernhardt.
Mrs. Pankhurst—Jesse James.
Anthony Comstock—Lady Godiva.
Elinor Glyn—Tom Jones.
William Winter—Hannah More.

A PROGRESSIVE is one who believes the common people are honest and intelligent; a reactionary is one who knows that they are not.

TENOR—One who commits musical sabotage.

CHRISTIAN Science and the coroner: the initiative and referendum.

PENSIONER—A kept patriot.

AMERICAN—One who believes that George Washington never told a lie, that a dark cigar is always a strong one, that lotteries are immoral, that Charles Klein is a great dramatist, that the night air is poisonous, that a horsehair put into a bottle of water will turn into a snake, that champagne is the best of all wines, that it snowed every Christmas down to fifteen years ago, that a bloodhound never makes a mistake, that all Frenchmen are adulterers, that the jokes in *Punch* are never funny, that the Mohammedans are heathens, that a sudden shock may cause the hair to turn gray overnight, that a cat has nine lives, that "The Holy City" is a musical classic, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, that maternal longings cause birthmarks, that Chili is less civilized than Ohio, that preaching is a learned profession, that swearing is forbidden by the Bible, that the Ibsen plays are obscene, that newspaper reporters carry notebooks, that whiskey is good for snakebite, that surgeons kill patients for the sheer pleasure of it, that every girl who falls has been seduced, that the music of Richard Wagner is all played *fortissimo* and by cornets, that the Masonic Order goes back to the days of King Solomon and that all women who smoke cigarettes go further.

THE devil: a man with a woman's soul.

PROHIBITION—The theory that the best way to combat a vice is to make it more vicious.

"GOOD" Woman—A union worker.
"BAD" Woman—A scab.

MISOGYNIST—A man who hates women as much as women hate one another.

NEVER swear *to* women or *by* women; swear *at* 'em.

EVERY man is his own hell.

MISS FORTUNE

A Page from the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson-Howard

MISS FORTUNE, whose name, by the deletion of a single sibilant, becomes Misfortune, is, in actuality, seldom further removed from that same Antithesis: the two are truly twins; and as no life can contain one without the other, it is best to have the Antithesis first and get it over with.

One has only to live long enough for Miss Fortune to appear. And she is found in the strangest places . . . for instance, Irving Feinberg's Palace of the Oriental Pleasure, before which Violet Vandam hesitated one night, uncertain as to whether she should pursue a habit that, though giving her tired body rest and her brain surcease, she had been warned would lead inevitably to a mortifying end. Thus it would seem she should have conquered her craving and gone her way—to Fortune; yet the Antithesis was lurching around the corner in the shape of a drunken man who was, in reality, a plain clothesman, his vivid jewelry a bait no impecunious outcast like Violet could have resisted; so another name would have been added to the "front office dick's" credit on the police blotter and to his discredit with the Recording Angel; while, within Irving Feinberg's dark doorway, Miss Fortune hovered with folded wings. Those who feel themselves capable of giving God points on the stage management of the Divine Comedy (which they call Drama and treat as Melodrama) would have called her entrance into this "den" another false step—she had taken the first one some time since—yet it was in reality aviation; though no one, no matter how gifted, could have guessed it, for, after being admitted into Miss Fortune's

presence, there was to be seen nothing even remotely suggesting her.

But, then, it was very dim there; only a few filigreed Moorish lanterns giving light; except for the many little lamps burning peanut oil to keep their flames steady, one to each bunk, along with one long bamboo pipe and one, sometimes two, persons using it. The bunks were built into the wall, two rows of them, one atop another, the general scheme not unlike a Pullman sleeping car. All were occupied when Violet entered, a fact brought to her attention none too graciously by Mr. Feinberg, a lean, handsome young Jew who wore silk shirts monogrammed, socks and ties to match; and who did not care particularly for women patrons: they boasted and brought trouble and some were inane enough to "steer suckers" there. He suggested that Violet had better not wait: this, too, paradoxical as it may seem, dictated by Miss Fortune, who had decided tonight was the night for her entrance into Violet's life comedy; for Feinberg voiced it loudly enough to attract the attention of Mr. Phillips, who otherwise might have continued dozing—thus missing all of Fortune's future gifts.

Franklin Phillips looked up and saw a tall, slender girl with a rare shade of auburn hair and odd Japanese-like eyes; and, being attracted by the Burne-Jones type of beauty, was able to perceive it when met with; even when thoroughly disguised by the sort of garments that were attention-compelling, and an advertisement, on Broadway after midnight. Moreover, his indulgence of the past hour, following upon an unusually

lucky week, had put him in a philanthropic mood; and, if ever there was one upon whom philanthropy could be successfully practised, this tired-eyed girl was she.

"Come on over," he said. "Bring another card, Chief." She thanked him mutely; and, since there is a freemasonry in such places which dispenses with introductions and ceremony, said nothing until she had removed her hat and shoes, loosened her dress and laid her head upon the pillow opposite his: a tray, with a multifarious collection of steel cooking needles, a sponge and other necessary articles, including the lamp with the steady little flame, separating them. Mr. Feinberg added to the collection a playing card upon which was stuck something resembling a flattened chocolate cream, which, when cooked over the steady flame, exuded an odor that increased the probability of the chocolate cream hypothesis, but that broke into an amazing number of tiny brown bits. One by one, these were attached to the clay bowl of the long bamboo pipe, and handed to Violet, who converted them into smoke. Meanwhile, the philanthropist, moved by Miss Fortune, urged confidences and criticised.

Violet had not been occupied by her present mode of life for more than a week; nor had she been a success; her unconquerable timidity preventing her from taking the initiative in any street acquaintanceship; so that her few adventures had been confined to other than the rowdy sort not averse to some remnant of modesty and reserve. But these were so very scarce that her room rent had not been paid.

Her story was not an unusual one: she had worked in a department store several years, resenting the familiarities of males and resisting their importunities; until Jim Healey had been appointed to the haberdashery department over the way. *His* familiarities she almost welcomed; and, as his wages were not greatly in excess of her own, they could not forever be at the moving picture shows nor at the Island; so, after winter made all the green benches from

Washington Square to Central Park untenable, there was only her single room in which to sit; and, here, familiarities grew inevitably into importunities, this time unresisted: then, afterward, with the example of other department store couples to give some show of sanction, they found that, by pooling their wages, they could have a sitting room, and could eat more frequently if they committed themselves frankly to a gas stove. But Jim's promotion to traveling salesman for a brand of neckties he had used his department store position to "push" broke up the Arcadia; and after the first few weeks, he found he had been oversanguine in assuring her he would be able to remit a weekly modicum. Violet had tried one room again and existence upon her weekly six dollars, but soon sickened of it, listening to a young man in gay tweeds who had been the most attractive of recent importuners: then she was late at the store three times and lost her position: afterward fell sick and the young man in gay tweeds ceased to call. . . . Weak and ill, looking for new work, she had met another girl who had, in pity, bought her lunch and given her certain points of a profession to which the shopgirl listened in horror. Yet, after another week and no work . . . It was that same girl who had brought her to Feinberg's the only other time she had been there: "To put some life into her, to cheer her up"; and, as never in her life had she felt more need of life and cheer than tonight, here she was.

"You poor kid," said Phillips. His "monaker," because of his discourse, which admiring friends claimed would persuade the wildest granger to exhume the red sock from under the pigpen, was "Con"; and he was a gentleman of such persuasive parts that he had also managed, in all instances, to leave the courts of justice without the least perceptible stain on his character; in each case protesting his citizen's right not to be "mugged" until after conviction, so that the police had no photographic reminders of his past annoyances. But, tonight, he was not in character, and permitted himself the luxury of being

genuine. "You certainly *are* a poor kid. You're *all* poor kids. No sense of values. No knowledge of masculine natures. No psychology. No management. No *wonder* you're all poor kids!"

He shook his head dolefully. "All waste," he said: "look at yourself. Pretty as a picture. Don't deny it. I know you don't look like a picture, but that's because you're dressed in atrocious taste. You're not even wearing the right colors. For the same price you paid for those droopy, sad-looking plumes and that big, floppy hat, you could have got a neat tailor-made affair with one quill; and your value 'ud gone up ten per cent. And for that gingerbreadly imitation of a rotten French model, a neat plain jacket and skirt: twenty per cent. more. And shoes—instead of those silly-looking Cuban heels that make you teeter along like a Chinese lily . . . And that foolish blouse with all the knots and patches of imitation lace which never look clean even when they're just home from the laundry . . . how do you *expect* to look like a picture?"

She told him, dolefully, that she did not. "But you *should*," he persisted; he was on his favorite hobby now, and the indulgence of the night gave him additional eloquence. She might have been the record roll of an automatic piano, so accurately was each detail of his speech etched on her mind. She began to see herself transformed as *he* saw her: a new and conquering Violet. "I tell you it's clothes, clothes, clothes. Look at me: they say I'd look well in *anything*. Well, they ought to see a picture of me *in* anything: as funny a looking guy as ever was allowed to scare crows out of the corn; but now I pay as much attention to my made-to-order collars and shirts as I do to my clothes." And colors! I try half a dozen ties on each morning before I'm satisfied. . . . I'd like to dress *you*, *once*, the way you *ought* to be dressed: you'd *see*."

He eyed her speculatively, the look of philanthropy deepening in his eyes. "I've got a good mind to," he said. "It'd be worth it. Why, listen, little girl: if you were dressed right and put on the stage,

there'd be a crowd of Johns pushing each other under one another's taxis, hoping each other would die so you could be their particular pet . . . no kidding. But, before that, you'd have to know how to *manage* them: have to read up on *la-de-dah* manners and customs: have to have *some* intelligent conversation . . . but then you girls *never* read anything."

"What *should* I read?" she asked, wide-eyed.

"Aw, *you* wouldn't *do* it," he responded, regretfully, with the knowledge of experience. However, she insisted, and, optimism being a fruit of Feinberg's hospitality, "Con" Phillips wrote down a list of authors and another of segregated books. "English novels are the best. You sorta absorb snobbery from them. But snobbery's what a girl needs to get along: don't make the mistake of putting it on with your friends, though—it's only a business language. . . . But that isn't all, either. A girl can have the style and the snobbery and still fall down. It's being on *sale*; being on sale crabs the whole thing, d'you understand?"

She shook her head, folding the penciled list as though it were a banknote of large denomination, tucking it away in a most private place; regarding him the while with an eager, anxious gaze.

"Well, it's like this: the fellows who give women lots of money don't *want* women on sale. 'Cause why? 'Cause if they're on sale, that means anybody and almost everybody can *buy*—while rich men want something only *they* can buy. That's why they pay a hundred thousand for a picture by an old master, have each piece of their china signed, pay fortunes for rugs and hand-carved ivories, have special liveries for their footmen, crests for their writing paper and carriage panels, and make their tailors promise nobody else shall have a suit cut from any pattern of cloth theirs is—see? They want something the mob *can't* buy, something only *they* can. It's the same when it comes to women—only more so. That's why you see some girls riding around in big 90 horsepower cars, wearing five-hundred-dollar gowns and five-thousand-dollar rings, while others, twice as pretty, grab

shorts—street cars I mean. The first kind played biggity until the right fellow showed up: the street car bunch was just naturally kind to strangers—all breeds. So when a rich man *did* get an eyeful, somebody squealed: 'Oh, anybody can get *her*'—crabbed before she started. But from what you say nobody's seen you around, yet; all *you've* got to do is get some regular rags and a job in a Broadway chorus, live on your salary, and wait."

Her eyes filled as she saw outlined, so clearly and certainly, something she was quite unable to accomplish. The tears decided Mr. Franklin Phillips; his philanthropy pyramided and he saw himself, at no very future date, sitting opposite a magnificently groomed woman, who doffed her languid and affected manners for him alone, to his triumphant: "I told you so." It would afford him the utmost personal satisfaction to punctuate his theories in future with irrefutable references to one who had found them practical; especially as he was not likely to discover again, in so low an estate, a girl with such manifest possibilities. Then, too—an advantage not to be overlooked by one who never knew when he would require bail and other outside assistance in case of a "tumble"—she would be much more grateful than the actual investment warranted. Of her success if she followed his suggestions, even partly, he had no shadow of doubt: such eyes, hair, slim hands and feet, slender figure. . . . Why, he was not unaffected himself, and he was a connoisseur: how, then, with less esthetic persons, especially when she had lacy lingerie, pitter-patter shoes, clothes and colors befitting her?

Carefully he restrained any show of personal affection, for he did not wish her to consider him in any way connected with her future after tomorrow. A woman was dangerous to one of his profession. He yawned.

"Tell you what: I happen to have a roll as big as a dime's worth of spinach. I'll probably try to break the book-makers with it—that means lose; so I'll just take a chance with you: make an investment. It'll be fun for me, dress-

ing up a woman the way I've always wanted to: then I'll lead you out into the center of Broadway, press a week's shed and doughnut money in your mitt, turn your nose toward a manager's office, and grab a rattler for Chicago. You can write me every now and then how you're getting on—if you're on the *square* with that look, you only need a chance—and, when I'm broke, I might ask you to stake me to a new B. R.—see?—so you better be there with the success stuff."

He yawned again: as though facing an inevitable which he did not welcome particularly, only accepted; yet, at that moment, his traitorous mind was asking him: "Why Chicago? Why not see your investment yield?" But he knew, if he remained, he would allow no such procedure: it would be easy to make of her a Frankenstein monster that would claim too much of his life. So he yawned for the third time, and spoke while the yawn lasted: "Well, shall we go . . .?"

The dazed girl followed him as a dog its master.

II

No sooner had Franklin Phillips left her next day and taken the Chicago train than he was consumed with regret that he had not stayed at least a day or so longer, telling himself it was his duty to have finished the work he had begun: to have seen to it that, were she repulsed by one manager, she should be directed to another and informed of an infallible system. Which was his way of deceiving himself as to the impression she had made on him. But he need not have worried: any girl with looks capable of charming "Con" Phillips out of several "centuries" needed no assistance in dealing with the marketers of feminine pulchritude—now that her charms were framed expensively and tastefully, and she was no longer a stray derelict but provided with rudder and compass in the shape of belief in herself and scorn for susceptible mankind; both of which Mr. Phillips had been at some pains further to inculcate in her.

When he left her standing on the curb of upper Broadway, a biscuit toss from that famous restaurant, Curate's, once an unattainable Elysium, she became almost immediately conscious that a well dressed man, who had been walking briskly, had begun to loiter nearby. His name she was never to know, nor did he again enter into her life; but in that moment she saw staged other scenes of Franklin Phillips's verbal play, "The Triumphs of the Beauty Errant." The day before, such a man would have looked no further than her floppy, feathery hat, her badly fitting, pretentious clothes; but now that she had shed them, as the caddis worm its house, and flown out on iridescent wings, he was actually allowing important affairs to wait—he was such a solid-looking fellow and he had walked *so* briskly; in the mere hope of a chance occurring that would enable him to address her! What pleased her even more was that, though his admiration was unfeigned, he did not dare approach without excuses. She preened herself a little, lifted her chin, and walked on in the style of an accustomed conqueror.

Miss Fortune had sent *him*, too; for, though Violet had listened and believed, she had been very humble in the presence of Mr. Phillips; and, when he left her there on Broadway, it was as though a stick had been removed from a radiant climbing vine. For all her gay expensive gown, her simple, costly, wide-brimmed hat, her dainty little shoes, her hair and skin glowing from the diligent efforts of beauty parlor artists, she had felt forlorn and helpless. Her brilliant future had seemed probable enough under the persuasive eloquence of Mr. Phillips; but—well, she needed just such a tangible manifestation as the solid-looking man's respectful admiration. Now she reflected that she had been a fool to doubt anyone so nearly divine as her benefactor. "Always remember, it is not that you are such a sharp, but that the world is such a flat"—had been his parting admonition: "especially on Broadway, where almost everybody is bluffing at being something he isn't. With your good looks set off by those

clothes, if you can't be a Ninon de l'Enclos you ought to go die. Anybody ought to get *by* in this stupid world—once they've had their chance."

He was so scornfully wise, she thought wistfully; if he could only have stayed, she would have been a star in a year. Then ambition seized her. Independent of any desire for aggrandizement, she aspired to achieve that she might win his praise. She had no notion who he was, nor what his occupation, aims, antecedents: only knew that last night, when he had condescended to caress her as one might a pet kitten, she had been raised to the *nth* degree of enchantment. She would have been content to have remained an adoring kitten had he stayed—for his careless caresses to have done damnable things; but it was apparent that a pet kitten could not *hold* him; that he had an unrealized vision of a magnificent creature, skilled in the arts of dress and conversation, learned in booklore; able, industrious, even illustrious. If he could see that vision realized in *her*, maybe next time he saw her . . .

In that moment, other men ceased to exist for Violet, save only as means to an end. She became a woman with a purpose. Such being the case, she would not deviate from it through any other emotions, for there would *be* no other emotions. A woman can succeed only by following one star: she has not enough trained ability to follow several; and, knowing this, subconsciously, she becomes deaf to pity, mercy, kindness, enjoyment—all the things of life that interfere with her purpose—until she has achieved it. So, when Violet Vandam walked into her future manager's office, she was clad in a coat of mail, helmeted, greaved, corseleted, spurred and sworded. Soft and clinging to the eye, she was steel to the touch; and confidence in her armor and weapons gave her an air of haughty aloofness no unassisted effort could have achieved. It impressed the impression-proof office boy who, daily, had a hundred tales of unrealized importance tried on him by strategic unknowns seeking to storm the managerial fortress. It impressed the manager's

secretary and general factotum when the awed office boy brought Violet within the keep. It even impressed the brain-fagged gentleman in the job too big for his abilities: and *he* saw daily hundreds of Cleopatras and Circes.

He gave her a note to his producer; a sealed note urging him, even if he had already picked his chorus, to replace one with this new find; for the manager's projected show was a summer show and, though he paid enormous salaries to comedians and prima donnas, dancers and eccentrics, he knew that, without a female chorus that would arouse in each male seat-purchaser the hope of or the desire to become personally acquainted, his show was forty per cent. finance. The chorus girl was star: you saw her pictures in dress clothes, street clothes, short clothes, ballet clothes, no clothes—almost; and these pictures must have pretty faces and dazzling limbs, or the costumes were wasted. Experience? Bah—he had the great Bob Ledyard who could make a professional out of an amateur in three weeks' rehearsal: the younger the better—they worked harder and didn't tell you they were there as a favor to the management and that their wages didn't pay for their maids and taxicabs.

Violet never needed the note; so later she broke it open and, reading what the manager had written, gained extra hope in realizing her vision. When she arrived, Bob Ledyard had not yet picked his chorus. Upon the great Garden stage five hundred girls were arranged in tiers, a ballroom scene having been set by Bob's orders and the girls told to stand on the thirty-five steps. Violet was guided by an assistant stage manager to a group of about her height. In a chair placed in the exact center of the stage "apron"—that semicircle of painted tin where are the footlights—Bob Ledyard's mighty bulk reposed, and he surveyed the assembled applicants with an eye that held only impersonal regard for the best effects to be gained by selecting one-fifth of the five hundred applicants. Presently he began to call the names of girls who had worked for him before and whom he had found satis-

factory: only the best of these, however, for he perceived many fresh and blooming faces among the newcomers, and sentiment could not be allowed to sway him; with five rival summer shows he must have the prettiest chorus. When it came the strangers' turn, Violet was the first one at whom he pointed his finger. She came down to him as she had seen the others do.

Something in his face, scornful yet kindly and efficient, that reminded her somehow of Phillips—told her to drop her pose in Ledyard's presence: told her that she should be truthful. "Dancer?" he asked. "I *like* to dance," she replied. "Sing?" "I *like* to sing, too." "Like to *work*?" he asked, smiling: she understood a doubt had occurred to him because of her expensive clothes. "You wouldn't *keep* me if I didn't *work*, would you?" she asked naïvely; "and I've *got* to work to *live*: besides, I want to be a *big actress*." She said it all in a breath, knowing among so many girls she would be lost unless she managed to make a favorable impression now. And she did: Ledyard smiled with a sort of impersonal affection; in this musical comedy world of lazy beauties, stupid beauties, insolent beauties, it was downright encouraging to meet a beauty who wanted to live on her wages and work to succeed. Her name, when she gave it, was penciled on Bob's mind as well as on his secretary's books. He crossed to the piano and whispered to the musical director.

"No matter what kind of pipes that girl's got, keep her. Her face and figure's worth it. If she can't sing, I'll make a dancer out of her." But Violet *could* sing: not extraordinarily, not sufficiently well to be retained for her voice alone, but with a sort of tremulous wistfulness, that, in a star, with the orchestra at pianissimo pitch, is called by the critics "small but sweet." Her dancing, too, had quality: it was the graceful, untrained swaying of a healthy young animal. After the first day or so, Ledyard began to wonder if he should not do something with her.

In a summer show, a so-called *revue*—at all events patterned after the Parisian

model to the extent that there are numerous unconnected scenes requiring many new characters to appear briefly and forever after be still—some of the chorus people are selected with an eye to past performances in the matter of “bits,” the playing of small parts; so it lies within the power of the producer to raise many to the temporary prominence of “lines”; necessities of the libretto that have been responsible for many accidental first night “hits.” And, as Violet accepted Ledyard as the avatar of the absent Phillips—a person who could help her to realize her vision—she was so industrious about practising difficult dance steps in the wings and at home that Ledyard, after fuming and swearing over a group of *difficile* dancers, one day turned them over to Violet. “I can’t waste any more time with you,” he said furiously; “let this little girl here—who seems to have some human intelligence—try to beat it into your pure concrete domes”—and sent them downstairs to a dressing room. From that time on, when the librettist had lines he did not know where to place, Ledyard gave them to Violet, until, by the time the show opened, she was playing a messenger boy in Scene I, a shopgirl in Scene IV, Lady Diana Carstairs in Act II, Scene I, and The American Beauty in the finale, none existing for a longer period than two minutes, nor requiring the versatility their varied character would seem to indicate: in fact, serving only one good purpose—to bring Violet to the attention of the management so that when Ledyard suggested her for a small but striking part in an operetta he rehearsed next, they had sufficient knowledge of her to accede. The operetta never saw New York: one of those spineless affairs bought only because a foreign composer’s belated hit with another show permitted him to rid himself at exorbitant prices of much early provincial work that smelled strongly of the German domestic virtues, it expired “on the one-nighters”; but Ledyard gained further confidence in Violet’s ability, and, as the management desired “to save a salary,” brought her back to the Garden and the show where she had begun; no longer as a

chorus girl but in the part of a resigning “principal.”

A long and tedious tour followed—week, half-week and one-night stands in cities, towns and hamlets: the names of half the latter unknown to the players, sleeping on a train that took them to one for a matinee, another train and another town for the evening’s performance, a third train and a longer “jump” to make the next night stand—and so on *ad nauseam*. Violet’s only consolations were the occasional letters she received from Phillips—who seemed to cover as much ground as she did, his postmarks always different—and the books he continued to recommend, of which she laid in a supply for her travels; gaining no particular popularity with companions for preferring puerile printed words to their sprightly, entertaining and scathing discourse about “rubes” and “rube towns,” unappreciative managements, rotten librettists who couldn’t write decent parts for magnetic artistes, composers whose tunes they had sung years before he wrote them, press agents who were always getting stuff in the papers about the show and not about them. But Violet was firm: Phillips had warned her of danger here.

“Most theatrical people never read anything but press notices and the *Morning Clarion*, never think there is any necessity to improve themselves—trusting in God’s recognition of their innate superior qualities,” he wrote. “If you stick around much with that mob you’ll only learn to love yourself passionately, incessantly. No company is preferable to poor company. Anyhow, superior people are never lonely: they’ve got too much to study and think about, too much to read. You *should* come back from this road tour fairly well educated . . .”

Which she did. But her study on the road brought her something else—for, following the advice of Phillips’s avatar, Ledyard, she had “gotten up” in the more important female roles, and this saved the sending on of an expensive substitute when one “featured” player went under the knife in St. Louis. So, by way of recompense, the management

had directed the librettist of the new summer show to fit her with a "regular" part, and Ledyard used her as the exponent of a style of sensational dancing and pantomime—mostly "fake"—which was then exciting the impressionable and ignorant New York public: a "vampire" dance, of which the chief requirements were that one should have a pretty face, pretty limbs and a graceful body. Attired only in a silver sheath that stretched diagonally from left shoulder to right thigh, with a huge rose pinned in its center, and her fine spun hair loose over her shoulders—the remainder of her body bare—Violet made blasé first-nighters gasp and speak of her thickly; and, as she stood at the top of a woodland path in ghostly moonlight, would have caused Burne-Jones to scorn his famous Vampire and paint another with her as model.

Thus she became one of those wild instantaneous "hits" that New York idealizes one year and forgets the next, unless a duplicate sensation is provided. In reality, Violet did nothing unusual: only played a temptation scene with a shepherd boy supposed, finally, to fall dead for love of her: this in crude dancing and pantomime, the story printed on the program, so primitive anyhow that it needed no great skill to elucidate its action. Still, had she not gained poise and presence by hard working experience, she would have made false steps, betrayed nervousness in her movements. As it was, she was hailed by the most absurd metropolitan critics in the world as the "peer of any Russian Queen of Terpsichore"—a judgment indicative of their absolute lack of knowledge of a splendid and sufficient art, a phrase quoted widely on "three" and "eight-sheets," "heralds" and "dodgers," until every billboard and ashcan bore mute witness to Violet's fame. But Phillips had taught her to be analytic, and she knew it had been only another triumph for his theory: *he* had raised her to a middle estate by proper costuming, *Ledyard* to a high one by supreme artistry of scene as well.

And so there happened that which Ledyard afterward declared gave him

incipient heart failure: the thing that had never been done, never would be again. Waiting for the others to arrive for rehearsal the next afternoon, actually looking up from a bundle of press cuttings designating her "wondrous," "incomparable," "divinely delightful" . . . Violet Vandam had caught his eye, colored and smiled.

"It's all *you*, Big Chief," she said: "I know. You painted a great picture, then dressed me up and stuck me in the center. *Your* lights—what *wonderful* lights, *your* scene, *your* pose, *your* scheme . . . and these foolish papers give all the credit to *me*. But"—she crossed and laid her arm affectionately on his shoulder—"we know—don't we?"

Ledyard gulped once or twice, tried to speak, failed, and stared at her, unbelievably; finally gasping out: "Vi, I'm sorry, but you weren't meant for this life; you'll never be a *regular* actress. You'll"—and, forgetting her sex, gave her a tremendous slap on the back—"die young, the only one of your breed." He turned to his assistant. "Do you think I can ever get anybody to *believe* that?"

His assistant shook his head solemnly.

III

THEN the deluge began, the prophecy of Phillips fulfilled. In hordes and swains they came: idle young polo players and club loungers; even wealthier older men, tired sensualists who searched for new sensations; prosperous artists and illustrators who thought to escape the stigma of "Johnnie" with the excuse of wanting to paint her—for no one protests more strongly against the appellation than the real "Johns" themselves; the amateur Bohemians of the Charles Lester Linthicum and Chisholm Cantilever sort—novelists, story writers, editors, impractical playwrights: who gave "artistic" dinners and suppers in dim candle-lit studios and who forever sought to convince pretty actresses that their varying professions had spiritual kinship, claiming to find all sorts of hidden mysticisms, messages and meanings

in perfectly patent stage trickery; the pet poets and philosophers of society, who, while seeking to identify fame and beauty with some "cause," are, incidentally, indecently erotic, amorous in the divine name of something-or-other; the parlor Anarchists and drawing room Socialists; the frankly admiring college boys and adolescents in general who are grateful for a few kind words and permission to spend their monthly allowances in a single night; and, finally, the Tired Business Man who has no conversation and no *chic* but much more money than any of the others, and who, with no time to study and understand the art of pleasing women, is as grateful as the adolescents if allowed to do the one thing at which he shines—which is to spend money in large quantities: a class that dares propose to radiant women nothing but marriage, their name, besides their money, being all they have to give.

To the last class belonged Peter Perine, Junior; to the second, the wealthy middle-aged sensualist, John Bulkington, 3d; and of their own and all the other classes who sought her, these two were the only ones that came to know Violet Vandam with any degree of intimacy; for Violet, now her chance had come, terrified lest she should prove unworthy of it, met no one until she had heard from Phillips; receiving expensive floral and saccharine tributes, jewelry and invitations all with apathy. And, when she got his letter, she eliminated from the running, without even meeting them, all gay young men, artists and other amateur Bohemians, parlor poets and philosophers, college boys, youths in general; all save serious-minded wealthy persons.

"Don't think you can take presents promiscuously and be seen in restaurants with a different man each night, without getting a cheap, common reputation," her mentor wrote from Hot Springs. "Any woman who sells her conversation and her company for taxicabs, suppers and champagne, who listens to conversations with double meanings and, finally, to downright smutty talk, might just as well go the limit. Her escorts

boast anyhow—it being the nature of such brutes to be afraid to confess failure for fear other men have succeeded and will give them the horse laugh. Anyhow, if a woman's mind is unclean, her body doesn't matter: the mind, the brain, the soul, call it what you like, lives a few thousand or a few million years, maybe forever; the body about sixty or seventy: if the mind learns to be clean, the body soon follows suit—as in your own case. But when the mind gets diseased—good night!

"But, to get down to the practical business of life, you're looking for a settlement: enough money to make you independent of men for life; so don't make any mistakes. Marriage doesn't much matter except as a proof of the man's seriousness: in fact, you're better off *unmarried* if you get a settlement just the same; because it's highly improbable you're going to meet the rich man you can love—money seems to ruin them as companions somehow—and you don't want him holding on by that legal tie when you need your freedom to enjoy his contribution. However, it's just as well to get him to *ask* you to marry him and then tell him, sadly, that a foolish childish marriage of yours still prevents the perfection of your maturer love being realized. If you are *really clever*, you should be able to get the money on his mere hope of marrying you when you have managed to find the mythical wandering husband and divorced him—I'll play the part by mail if you like; and I'm better than a raw hand at anything pertaining to larceny. . . ."

If she could have seen him as he wrote a portion of that letter—when he winced over an ugly thought and hastened to spur her on to "cleverness" as a means of avoiding its realization—Violet Vandam might have felt less sick at heart, might have believed that, after all, he was not unconcerned over the thought of her becoming another man's property as his coldly casual advice seemed to imply. But, next morning, she considered that, as yet, Phillips knew her only as the tawdry Cinderella to whom he had played godmother. When he saw her on the stage . . . when he heard her

speak of men and things as his books had taught her, when she took him to dine in her own country home amid surroundings that proved a chaste and informed taste . . .

That home, those surroundings: she did not have them yet. She must hasten, do what must be done however disagreeable. . . . She turned to her mail, tossing most of it into the wastebasket, finally, pausing over the name of "John Bulkington 3d"—Peter Perine, Junior, having yet to be heard from. Bulkington's note of discreet admiration, accompanying a rare and expensive Vampire study—"Dracula"—which now hung in the theater lobby—she answered in her best slanted handwriting—an affectation she had learned from a convent girl friend—expressing gratification that one so well known as a connoisseur of the arts should have found her humble efforts pleasing; but—chiefly—informing him that she never dined or supped in restaurants alone even with one so justly famed; but would he drop in for a cup of tea and let her thank him in person for a wonderful inspiring gift? Which was just the sort of letter to impress Mr. Bulkington.

IV

Thus Violet became known to awe-inspired adventurers as "the girl who threw Bulkington down"; again, despite appearances, proving that Miss Fortune was still "on the job," directing her triumphal progress. Violet had not meant so to treat Mr. Bulkington: who had erected a theater for one young woman he fancied, inscribing her in some new comic History of New York by identifying her name with the building; also, for the same lady, a treasure house just off the Park—on the "right" side, too, amid a flustered and protesting aristocracy, a villa at Nice and a Long Island chateau, the latter brought piece by piece from Normandy. She had been the only one he took seriously until he met Violet; but even his casual affairs had been marked by a Lucullan liberality, had established for life young

women of mediocre talents. All this Violet knew and urged upon herself repeatedly: no more strife or struggle, all the good things of life forever after: it would not have seemed a hard bargain for one who, only a few years earlier, had given herself carelessly to a haberdashery clerk and to a bounder in gay tweeds: afterward taking her body into the cheapest market.

But it was as Phillips had written: when the mind is clean, the body must be; and a girl cannot worship a star unceasingly for any long space and then see the things of earth with the same eyes. Something had awakened in Cinderella that night, outcast as she was, emerging from an opium den to spend the night with a stranger she had known only two hours—and he a thief!—something, nevertheless, fine and clean. Her affair with Jim Healey had been the outcome of starvation for a little happiness—her life had contained none of the innocent joys of youth. She had gone from a strict Calvinistic home and daily drudgery to the little liberty that her tired body could take after ten hours of work each day: a body, moreover, un-nourished by good food or fresh air or healthful exercise; her mind one that swung like a pendulum between stern dark belief in hell's eternal fire, and its concomitant, that God could be cheated if the world did not find out. Her affair with the tweed-clad bounder was a choice between two evils: a return to hunger and loneliness or another yielding of herself—and, as she still believed, then, that if one had once taken his feet from the narrow path, damnation was sure—why not? Which also explains her position in the market place. Had Phillips not met her, she would have learned to drink to drown her fear of that certain damnation, and would have fallen, by rapid stages, to Fourteenth Street, the Bowery, Chinatown and the morgue.

But she hardly knew Cinderella now except to wonder at her. No doubt Phillips could have done nothing with her, his words and money pitifully wasted, had not she, in that night of careless caresses, lost all feeling of sin,

for, though she had given her body before, it was the first time she had given herself. And so a white flame had been lighted—the flame of knowledge; that since had fed on all that was best in poets and philosophers; and, now, she looked upon the world with eyes of understanding. So looking upon Mr. Bulkington, seeing his heavy body shake with ill-concealed and ugly passion, no saurian with foul musky breath could have more affrighted and repelled her. He had bided his time like a gentleman: had made no bargain, had lavished on her unusual gifts of marbles, paintings, tapestries, hangings—any of which would have done justice to a museum: had placed at her disposal his most expensive town car, was only too delighted to discover oddly shaped or curiously set jewelry which would fitly adorn her—even made decent the fact that he bought her clothes, by urging upon her it was a pleasure to be allowed to gratify his bizarre theories concerning women's raiment: so that nowadays she looked like a Byzantine princess, setting a style that was the despair of modistes and of women who did not have her unusual hair and coloring, her tall, slender figure, nor the advantage of a designer who was called a "master financier." Undoubtedly, Bulkington had a deep and devout art sense that might have saved him, had his father not insisted on his following a business the third Bulkington hated.

"You'll give up a wonderful future?" he asked in incredulous amazement, when she repulsed him, with finality. "Why, I'll make you the best known actress in America. These theater and producing managers—bah!" He snapped his fingers. "Why, I or my associates own most of their theaters, *back* half their shows, can break the biggest of them—like that! This theater game isn't worth a big man bothering about, so we let the little fellows run it—but I'll step in and take enough to make *you* famous. You know what I did for Yvonne Maxfield? I'll do *more* for you!"

He was wise enough to make no passionate appeal: he had a sense of humor and knew how ridiculous such must seem from a man of his girth and gout; but he

stated plainly a proposition it seemed no woman in her senses would refuse. Nevertheless, Violet, with averted face that she might not see the ugly picture of him in amorous guise, *did* refuse; and he went his way, raging, then wondering, finally respecting. He was too big a man, unscrupulous buccaneer though he was, not to recognize bigness in others; and, unlike the small and despicable sort, could afford to acknowledge defeat. It was preferable to keeping silent about such an unusual character as Violet.

"To think," he told several of his confidants, repeating his incredible discomfiture in full, "to think of turning *me* down!" Such a story spread rapidly through the clubs. Almost nightly at the Garden, Violet's entrance was heralded by a hush: out of which, at her appearance, came whispers from groups of well groomed Avenue *mondaines*, men and women alike. ". . . The girl who turned old Bulkington down."

In one of those groups one night was Peter Perine, Junior, whose father owned the biggest department store in the city: who, himself, unlike most rich men's sons, was a hard-working member of the Exchange; a great "catch": *débutantes* put on their prettiest frocks for him, but he was too busy to notice. His adventures had been confined to intrigues with women on public sale: intrigues for which he paid bitterly in remorse, his ideals of "true womanhood" remaining unchanged. Of the stage he knew nothing: he had not even supped with a chorus girl; so, when he saw Violet and heard of her amazing chastity, there were no ugly reminders of others of her class to interfere with his dreams.

"Imagine: how many girls, even of *our kind*, would have refused?" he heard one of the women of his party saying. It disgusted him to hear such "cynical" talk: and from women with every advantage of birth, breeding, education and luxury, too. How different that brave little heroine back there, working hard for a living, engaged in a performance that must outrage her delicate sense of virtue! He hated the Vampire Dance; hated the thought that, nightly, this shrinking girl must expose her beau-

tiful body to evil-minded men. He did not realize that he, himself, was capable of only the grossest passions: that, when married to this girl, his amours would in no way differ from those vulgar ones of the past; but the pill of vice would be coated with the sugar of respectability, so that he could run riot with his conscience's full approval. Had there been less of Violet's milk-white legs and body exposed, his "great love" might not have surged so hotly to his brain; but, of course, vulgar desire was not in keeping with thoughts of the girl who had "thrown down Bulkington": so it must be that purest of passions, love. Such is always the way of the Puritan: those shamefaced men who prowl the streets late at night, accosting street women in husky, strained voices, are always those who raise loudest their squeals against women's immorality; who speak bitterly of shattered ideals if their wives or sweethearts betray human failings . . .

So Peter Perine, Junior, would loftily tell himself of Violet: "*I don't think of her in that way at all*"; until he had wooed her with respectful admiration, adored her as some Saint Cecilia, declared he was not fit to marry her, and then proved it, after marriage. But he could awake each morning with a pleasant sense of virtue to carry his conscience through the day, and it would all be highly right and proper because she would have worn orange blossoms and have been breathed over by the voice of a respectable and snakeless Eden.

V

HE asked her to marry him just two months later, after a courtship that included every possible present the ingenuity of man could conceive. She had permitted his caresses, his near-presence: had used all her ability as an actress to convince him that he would have been just as successful had he been penniless; and, then, next day, after having permitted nothing to interfere with his dream of eternal (but respectable) license, she talked to him calmly

and sanely. She could not abandon her economic independence even for love—a useful phrase from a book recently read. If he wanted her to give up the stage, he must make her independence otherwise possible: she could not daily ask him for money: such marriages were degrading. And "if love grew cold," he would not wish her to remain with him just for the sake of having her expenses paid, or, else, have a long and vulgar legal wrangle about how much alimony should be awarded, would he? Therefore . . . wasn't there such a thing as a marriage settlement? He leaped up, protesting he had been a brute not to suggest it himself; and, soon after, papers were made official and important by signatures and red tape, and the last stage of Phillips's prophecy was reached: she was a woman of independent fortune, and still unmarried.

But she meant to pay: the marriage would have taken place. Phillips, when informed of Perine's advent, had poured pails of water over her flame: the star had hidden itself in dark heavens; the vision would be ever unrealized: for Phillips had advised, calmly and practically, that such a marriage was ideal: that she was a very lucky girl: that he could not imagine why she hesitated; and so, she saw at last, there was no stray hope for her: she had been only an interesting experiment to him: his advice and letters but evidences of a scientist's interest in an insect in a test tube. That letter had decided her: it was the last she ever received from him; but his final message was a telegram that came on the day her settlement had been arranged—came while Perine was waiting in her little drawing room and she was standing before the mirror in her bedroom fastening a rubber corset over a silk shirt and gazing at her mirrored charms in dull apathy: what did they matter now, or how long she kept her tiresome fiancé waiting for their drive?

But the telegram changed all that. Perine had never seen her so alluringly beautiful as, with silky hair loose over her shoulders, and in a cherry-colored kimono held together with one hand, she

stretched out the scrap of paper. It read, briefly:

Am in the Tombs charged with conspiracy to defraud; penalty not less than seven years. Bail not allowed. Perine can square things for me. Will you ask him?

PHILLIPS.

Curiously enough, no outside opinions can change a woman's love, no incidents unconnected with her, affect it: a fact that makes ridiculous those plays and novels in which the heroine, crying: "My God—you a thief?" ("forger" or "murderer" to suit) drives her lover forth forever. So Phillips, self-confessed criminal and possible convict, was still the great man of Violet's vision, just as desirable, just as dearly loved. It did not occur to her that Perine might not care to have a brother-in-law who was a criminal. The "no bail" phrase frightened her, and, with no thought of herself, she took the surest way to make Perine exert all his influence.

"My brother," she sobbed as he read: "my brother. I'll die if he's sent away. You can fix it: he says so here. Hurry, hurry, hurry: get him out—hurry!" She almost pushed him from the room before he could get such a necessary detail as her "brother's" full name . . .

VI

PHILLIPS had been right: Perine *could* "square" it: a man as rich as Perine—representing the allied Perine interests, can "square" anything in New York. He went directly to the "Old Man" on Fourteenth Street, who, from time to time, arranged certain matters of legislation in favor of the "big interests"; and the "Old Man" visited the Chief of Police, who was only a vice-regent (in a double sense), the "Old Man's" deputy. Whereupon orders were issued to the "Front Office" to forget any record Phillips might have: he hadn't been "mugged" or measured, had he? That was enough—he was a respectable citizen un'ustly suspected! So the victim of Phillips's wireless wiretapping was visited by a "front office dick" and informed that, as he had engaged with

Phillips in a scheme to defraud the book-makers, he, too, must stand trial for conspiracy, otherwise Phillips could not be indicted—this being the old law, recently revised. Moreover, if the judge happened to be in a nasty mood, he (the victim) might also be sentenced. He had best see the Assistant District Attorney in charge of the case; who, being another appointee by grace of Fourteenth Street and looking for future preferment, told the victim that, besides running a chance of imprisonment, he would be unlikely to get back his money; whereas it had been hinted if the case were withdrawn, the accused would disgorge. . . . So, soon, there was only the duty of the State to prosecute; but *that* terminated in an apology to the prisoner for false imprisonment and the information from the judge—who played pinocle with the "Old Man"—that he had a suit against his defamer.

The clerk called the name as "Franklin Phillips, Esquire"; the Judge addressed him throughout as "Mr. Phillips"; while, the next moment, he was severely chastising with words one who had stolen several pounds of brass from a railroad, sentencing so horrible an offender against property to the limit of the law. . . . Phillips was not surprised at the newborn respect of the judiciary and constabulary: he was a rich man's friend.

But two days later he shuddered to think what would happen if he ever fell into the hands of "justice" again; for, on that date, he stepped out of the famous Little Church where a rector detained [from dinner had gabbled a marriage ceremony while pulling on his cassock, making Violet Vandam—who confessed her name actually to be Mary Jones—Mrs. Frank White, which was as near to Franklin Phillips as he had been christened. He had been too weak, too broken, in his cell, to keep up his pose longer: had admitted he had gone on the principle, with her, that it was useless to make her decent and successful only to marry her to a crook. . . .

"But you don't *have* to be a crook, dearest," she sobbed, holding him tight: "I have lots of money now—and I *need*

you. I've got some *reputation*, but really I'm *nobody*. You can have a chance to use your brains—to put on a real show, make an actress out of me—a real actress. It won't be living on *my* money—I *knew* you'd say that; it'll be *hard work*. Oh, Phillips, *please!*"

She was very sorry for Perine: she *was, really*; but—she argued—his was the misfortune of war. Was *she* to be unhappy? Anyhow, it was all his father's fault—Peter Perine, Senior's; didn't he own the department store where she had been underpaid; and if her wages had been decent, wouldn't she be there still, instead of being forced into degradation—though, afterward, luckily, uplifted! What if she did owe Perine something—she owed Phillips more; and what had Perine given her anyhow except money that had come from underpaying just such girls as she? . . . Yes,

let him go quarrel with his father, not with her. And, so, easily, she salved her conscience, leaving, however, for Europe lest Perine prove unreasonable; all of which may account, partly, for the Socialist papers, nowadays, calling Perine the most brutal of all oppressors of the poor.

You may see Franklin Phillips on Broadway any day and mistake him for a well dressed Englishman. He has an office near Forty-second Street, where he plans the production of plays by Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann and Wedekind, with fliers into farce to provide the money for them, and an occasional Shakesperian production for his wife, the well known "star." Each night, he motors out to their Westchester farm. "*Broadway*," he said to me the other day, "*Broadway*: I hate it. The rottenest *morals* . . ."



BREATH

By Witter Bynner

WHEN so I lean my hand upon your shoulder,
 When so I let my hand fall forward
 To the delicate arch of the breath,
 To this most palpable cover and mould
 Of all the everlasting waves of life,
 It is not you nor love I love—but life itself.
 I look at you with a stranger, older intimacy,
 I forget who you are whom I love,
 With your single separate face,
 I forget this or any of the generations
 And its single separate face,
 Its lovely, curious fallacy of choice. . . .
 Beyond the incomprehensible madness
 Of the shoulder and the breast,
 Above the tumult of obliteration,
 I sow and reap upon the clouded tops of mountains
 And am myself both sown and harvested,
 And, from afar off, I behold, forget, achieve,
 You and myself and all things,
 When so I let my hand fall forward
 To the remote circumference of breath.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM

By Robert Garland

CHARACTERS

JOHN (*the husband*)

MARY (*the wife*)

PLACE: *Their room.*

TIME: *Today.*

SCENE—*The room is as chill and grimly gray and hopeless as a February sky. Its two windows stare unhappily upon the elevated railway. Before one window a shade hangs awry, a soiled white shade with many ragged rents. The other window is curtainless, the upper half a huge patch of brittle light, the lower half a blur of red and green and yellow where a Sunday Supplement has been tacked across to shield the occupants from the passing gaze. The room is all but unfurnished. A battered deal table occupies the centre of the floor, a hideous oak bedstead, covered with a "crazy-quilt," is against the side wall, a much abused oak dressing-table lurks between the windows. To the right a steamer trunk wears a woefully untraveled air. On the table a student's lamp, with a cracked green shade, rises above a sea of manuscripts.*

One can see that it is bitter cold without, and within. Beyond the windows, through the slowly falling snow, the elevated trains rumble past, hideously loud. From the street comes the unceasing passing of many vehicles, mingling with the jangling of trolley bells. Night is settling sullenly over the great city. An ominous darkness is beginning to gather in the corners of the room.

JOHN and MARY are alone. He has just come in, and is sitting, hat in hand, near the darkening window, gazing down into the street. He is a man of thirty-one or two. His face is the face of a dreamer, a dreamer of clean dreams. His wife is seated beside the table on a broken chair, and, although her eyes are open, she does not seem to see the squalor of her surroundings. Without knowing why, one would say that the light of an approaching motherhood is in her eyes, the glow of it upon her countenance. She has kept her loveliness about her like a garment. In the half-light she seems the personification of sweet, clean womanhood—the roughness of poverty and unsuccess is almost swept away.

Within the room there is silence for a moment; then the man turns to where the woman sits.

HE (*softly*)

Mary!

(*The woman does not seem to hear.*)

Mary!

SHE (*in an almost toneless voice*)

Yes, dear—yes.

HE

Is there no supper at all?

SHE

Nothing you could by any chance call a supper.

HE (*quietly*)

Is there food of any kind?

SHE

There are a few stale soda crackers in the bureau drawer. And half a jar of jam. I ate the bananas at lunch time. I was very hungry.

HE

There's nothing else?

SHE

Nothing.

(*There is silence for a moment.*)

HE (*as if he well knew what the answer is to be*)

And there isn't any money?

SHE

None. Did you have a bad day? I was very much worried.

HE

It was a disillusioning day, Mary dear. Merely another wasted day, with no result whatever.

SHE

Did you go to see Hilderbrandt, John?

HE

Yes, dear. That's where I came from just now.

SHE (*a glimmer of hope in the grayness of her voice*)

What luck, boy o' mine?

HE

After keeping me waiting three mortal hours, he told me the same story. He would look my work over. He was a bit more frank than the others when he added that there was but small chance of acceptance.

SHE

Did he say just why?

HE

He gave *his* reasons.

SHE

Well?

HE

The public is tired of love stories, he said. Tales of sweet young things and youthful love are a drug upon the market. He pointed out that everyone wrote them nowadays, and wrote them rather well. He said that I might as well try to sell a dialect or "Zenda" story as my "Love's Young Dream."

SHE (*with calm bitterness*)

Isn't there love in the world any more?

HE (*whimsically*)

There is your love—and mine.

SHE

My John o' Dreams! But there is other love, plenty of it.

HE (*with sudden seriousness*)

But Hilderbrandt says people don't want to read about it. Besides, they're not interested in beautiful, medieval, Burne-Jones sort of women and gallant young knights. They're not what the public wants.

SHE

Didn't he acknowledge, after glancing over your work, that it was good?

HE

Yes. He readily acknowledged that it was well done, that it was good of its kind. But the kind is not now salable.

SHE (*very softly*)

We know how very true that is, don't we, dear?

HE

Yes, we know. My God, we know!
(The man rises, and, removing his well worn overcoat, places it about the woman's shoulders. He then returns to his seat beside the window.)

SHE (smiling)

Thank you, dear. I'll return it in a moment, as soon as I get just a little warm. I must be careful—now.

HE (his head in his hands)

Now—oh, God!

SHE

What are we going to do, dear?

HE

I don't know. I have tried hard for hack work of any kind, but the supply of willing hacks far overshadows any demand there may be for work of that kind. It is easy enough to criticize books and stories you couldn't possibly have thought of, or plays you couldn't have written to save your life.

SHE

Yes, I know—I know. *(It is gradually growing dark within the room. The noise of many hastening feet come up to the window where he sits. The crowded, lighted cars roar by on the elevated, and, at their passing, the entire building seems to shake. The noise of their passing is almost unbearable.)* The collector came today. I told him it was no use. There wasn't any money.

HE

Yes, I know.

SHE

The collector was rather nice, dear. He said there were many others like us. He would wait two weeks, and then—

HE

Two weeks. And then—

SHE (interrupting)

Had Hilderbrandt any suggestions to offer?

HE (glad of the interruption)

Yes.

SHE

What were they?

HE

That I get some other sort of work to do.

SHE

And give up literature? After you have slaved so long and hard. I—I wouldn't let you do it.

HE

You're right. Literature has ever been the dream of my life. Ever since a boy at school I've tinkered at it. It's a dream that has taken my small inheritance and my youth as well. It's a dream that's killing you and me. My dearest, it doesn't pay. It's best to give it up.

SHE *(finding the weakness in his argument, womanwise)*

Why give up a dream because, so far, it hasn't paid? Are dreams supposed to pay? Make your dream into a reality. I believe in you. You believe in yourself. Nothing one believes in can be untrue. It is doubt that kills. Success will come if we but wait.

HE

But meantime we must live.

SHE

Why must we live? *(There is a pause.)* I'd get work myself, gladly—any kind of work. But with baby coming—

HE

The idea is absurdly impossible, but it smacks of the divine. *(His eyes cloud for a moment, but he shakes the mist away.)* It'll be dreadfully hard on baby.

SHE

That's what I'm thinking. I don't mind for you and me, boy dear. But when baby comes—

(The roar outside drowns their voices. He looks across the room at her.)

Mary. HE

Yes? SHE

Do you regret having married me? HE

No. SHE

HE (*insistingly*)
Not sometimes when I'm away?
When you're cold and hungry and—

No. SHE

HE
Not even when you think of baby?

SHE
Never for the shadow of a moment,
dear. Not even when I think of baby.

HE (*as if to himself*)
It's been so much worse than I had
ever dreamed. I never thought how
difficult it would be to keep our self-
respect when even the little decencies
that go to make life bearable are denied.
And do you remember the glorious
future for which we hoped? Well, this
is it. Not poverty . . . that we could
bear, but plain, matter-of-fact starva-
tion. It's difficult to starve romantic-
ally. But then, it was for better or for
worse.

SHE (*quite simply*)
There could be no worse while you
are with me, John. (*She smiles as she
questions him again.*) Did Hilderbrandt
tell you just what the public wants?

HE
Yes.

SHE
What is it? He should know. He's
a successful editor and a business man
as well.

HE
He says it wants stories dealing with
real life, life as it is lived today. Not
dreams of youthful bliss and the joy of
life when love and the world were young.
They're as near his words as I can
remember.

SHE
Well—

HE
He also suggested that I write some-
thing real, something showing the mod-
ern complex struggle for existence, the
struggle for the money which is life, and
health and happiness.

SHE
Yes—?

HE (*with growing interest*)
The struggle which, he pointed out,
goes on everywhere today.

SHE
Why don't you do as he suggests?

HE (*pleasantly impatient*)
I don't know anything about politics,
or graft, or high finance.

SHE
I know you don't. But they're far
from being the only struggles of today.
You *do* know about literary endeavors
and the endless fight for success, for a
success that has not come.

HE
Yes—

SHE
Why not write of that?

HE
You mean—

SHE
Write of you and me, simply and
truthfully. Picture your early dreams
and ideals and huge hope of final success,
of well-earned fame. Tell about your
repeated failures, your grim, resentful
determination to stick it out. The
public wants life. Give it what it wants.

HE
Our life? Yours and mine?

SHE
Yes . . . our life. It's a pity you
can't tell the end of it all, but that's
impossible. It's a pity you can't finish
the story with a cottage in the country

and baby playing before the rose-bowered door, thanks to a literary triumph. But it can't be done. It's life the public desires, and that would be romance. Tell of our talk here in the gradual darkening, with real hunger outside like an angry beast of prey. Tell about baby coming, and no money to even pay a doctor. Let the public see that we are gentle people, starving for an ideal.

HE (*doubtingly*)

An ideal which may be entirely wrong.

SHE

But an ideal, none the less.

HE

It wouldn't interest the public, would it?

SHE

Hilderbrandt said the public wants stories of real life, life as it's lived today. God knows it'll be real enough, and to spare.

HE

Yes . . . it'll be real. There'll be no doubt of that.

SHE

Make it so genuine that it'll sound like artifice. Give the public what it wants. Then, maybe, the public will give us what we desire.

HE

But—

SHE

Try it, anyway. Things can't be any worse, that's a certainty.

(Shrill, happy laughter floats up from the street and mingles with the rag-time of a mechanical piano-player. The street lights are now ablaze, and cast swaying squares of brightness upon the mottled ceiling of the room. The man rises and paces the room until the piano-player has finished its tawdry air. He then takes the woman in his arms and kisses her.)

HE (*in half-serious mockery*)
And sell ourselves for gold?

SHE (*seriously*)

I'd sell most anything for gold when I think of baby. And it may be the beginning of your success.

HE

It may come too late.

SHE

Though success come after one is dead it does not come too late.

(He lights the lamp, takes up pen and paper, brushing the litter from the table to the floor. To warm his hands he breathes upon them.)

HE

Shall I tell the whole truth, just as it happened?

SHE

Just as it happened. Nothing but the truth. For it is to be the truest narrative ever written. *(He sits at the table. She pulls the covering from the bed and wraps it and her arms about him.)* What is to be the title, boy?

HE (*smiling up at her*)

"Love's Young Dream." *(She leans over and kisses his hair.)* How shall I begin it, dear? I've never written of facts before. *(She looks, slowly and intently, about the sordid room, seeming to take in each wretched detail, then points to the paper before him.)*

SHE

Begin it like this: "The room is as chill and gray and hopeless as a February sky. Its two windows stare unhappily upon the elevated railway. Before one window a shade hangs awry, a soiled white shade with many ragged rents. The other window is curtainless. . . ."

(The noise of a passing train blots out her words, and the mechanical piano-player takes up its tune. She is still dictating as the curtain falls.)

SATAN

By Achmed Abdullah

BY the shore of the sea he stood, pale and gigantic, and his wide wings trembled and rustled like black sails before the shock of the wind, and threw deep, fantastic shadows over valley and hill. Lonely he stood, and proud and unrepenting, but in his deep-set eyes there burned the white fever and the horrible longing of the exile who can never return.

Yelling and shouting and croaking and shrieking, a troop of women swished through the air. Blood red roses were in their lank gray hair, and their dry clanking bones were covered with brocade and cloth of gold and satins of rich crimson and peacock green. Precious stones shone from wrist and ankle and ear, and it seemed as if they were trying to mock the obscene hideousness of their gray years with the jewels and silks and flowers of youth.

He knew the drunk and loathsome brood. He had known them all since the first day of creation . . . known them since the night Lilith had given birth to his brother, the snake . . . this one had slumbered in his arms, and that one had drunk the poison of his kisses. . . . But there was one who was strange to him. He did not know her, and he wondered . . . for she was young . . . a golden mane covered her neck and her pointed, pink-tipped breasts, like the reddish-glowing fire of the newborn sun, and white swansdown was the glory of her ivory body.

She looked at him, and childish curiosity, childish desire awakened in her blue eyes. Unconsciously she drifted away from her wild companions, and with a strange cry of love hurt, like a dagger cutting through thin silk, she came up to him who stood there, pale and gigantic and unrepenting and cursing the God who had exiled him. She put her golden head against his breast, and her lips opened to his, carelessly and fearlessly, and trembling with young desire.

And in his heart hissed all the scorn and all the insolence, all the flames of revenge and black pride which gnawed at his tired soul . . . they lifted their flat heads like venomous cobras . . . and trembling between hatred and passion, he pushed the woman from him and out into the death embrace of the darkening waves.

By the shore of the sea he stood, pale and gigantic, and his wide wings trembled like black sails before the shock of the wind, and his laughter sounded over valley and hill . . . his laughter, cold and challenging and hateful and hopeless:

"Little angels who serve the God who exiled me because of my just pride, little angels who serve the God whom I hate and curse . . . sing a hymn of thanksgiving and love . . . for today Satan hath saved a soul. . . ."



MEN are corrupted by the same knowledge that keeps a woman in the straight path.

THE AMERICAN: HIS LANGUAGE

By H. L. Mencken

IF it were not for the fact that school teachers, as a class, are the most hunkorous and unobservant folk in all the world, the teaching of orthodox English in the public schools of America would have been abandoned long ago. Thomas Jefferson, that sure-sighted fellow, saw clearly that the language could not serve permanently the complex and expanding needs of the American people. "The new circumstances under which we are placed," he wrote to John Waldo on August 16, 1813, "call for new words, new phrases, and for the transfer of old words to new objects. An American dialect will therefore be formed."

This prediction, as every attentive man must know, has been amply fulfilled. American is now so rich in new words, new phrases and old words transferred to new objects that it is utterly unintelligible to an educated Englishman, and, as I shall presently show, its grammar and pronunciation have undergone great changes as its vocabulary has developed. But the poor little martyrs in the schools are still taught English instead of American—and not the fluent, racy, loose-jointed English of living and breathing Englishmen, but the heavy, precise, classical, esoteric English of Macaulay, Addison, Herbert Spencer and Matthew Arnold. Even an Englishman, native to the soil and bred in English schools, does not find this grammar book language ready to his tongue. When he sits down to write a book, a speech or a letter to *The Times*, he has to think the thing out in one language—the spoken English of his particular class and year—and then translate it laboriously into another language—the petrified, bloodless, clumsy English of the pundits.

Some Englishmen, true enough, know this artificial language well enough to write it almost spontaneously, just as many medieval scholars knew Latin, and as a few stray Jews, even today, know the pure Hebrew of the days before the Babylonian captivity. But the great majority of Englishmen know it only imperfectly. Some can read it without being able to write it; some can read it and understand, say, seventy-five per cent. of it; others can understand only fifty per cent., or twenty-five per cent.

Finally, there are the millions who can understand only those elements of it which it has in common with the English of the people—a few of its root words and most of its connectives. When such Englishmen read a leader in *The Times* (which they seldom do more than once in a lifetime) they do not get the exact sense of it, nor even half the sense of it, but only the general drift of it, just as the average Jew gets only the general drift of the Talmud, and the average Italian and Russian get only the general drift of the Latin and Old Slavonic masses.

But, as I have said, the American schoolboy is forced to master the complex and senseless grammar of this foreign and mummified tongue, and even to listen to lectures upon its orthodox pronunciation. It is the master bugbear of his first six years of schooling, and it usually so disgusts him with learning that he never opens a text-book of any sort after he has once left school. And what he is thus forced to learn, unwillingly and against the sharp common sense of childhood, is not only useless to him, but even a bit dangerous. That is to say, he would bring down social odium

upon himself, and often actual punishment, if he essayed to speak such a strutting, artificial language outside the schoolroom. His companions, on the one hand, would laugh at him as a prig, and his parents, on the other hand, would probably cane him as an impertinent critic of their own speech. Once he has made his farewell to the schoolmarm, all her effort upon him goes to waste, and all his own effort with it. The boys with whom he plays baseball speak American, and not English, and so do the youths with whom he will begin learning a trade tomorrow, and the girl he will marry later on, and the saloon-keepers, vaudeville comedians, shyster lawyers, business sharpeners, and political mountebanks he will look up to and try to imitate all the rest of his life.

It is a bitter waste of time to teach this boy the difference, in transcendental English, between *will* and *shall*, *should* and *would*, *who* and *whom*, for in the American language no such distinctions exist. It is perfectly proper, in American, to say, "I *will* be forty years old tomorrow," or "The girl *who* you introduced me to." Again, it is useless to teach him that the double negative is a contradiction in terms, for he knows very well that "I don't want no more" has a precise and intelligible meaning, and so do his sisters and his cousins and his aunts. Yet again, it is ridiculous to warn him against such forms as "I have gotten," "Him and her were married," "He loaned me a dollar," "I blowed in the money," "The bee stang him," "The man was found \$2," "His wife give him hell," "The baby et the soap," "Give everybody whatever is theirn," "It's me," "We taken a trip to Atlantic City," and "Us boys killed a cat." These transformations of the verb and the pronoun, whatever their immorality in English, are perfectly allowable in American. Some of them, such as *gotten* for *got*, are merely archaic English forms, surviving in America long after their disappearance in England, just as many other archaic English forms have survived in Ireland. But others, such as the use of the objective pronoun in the nominative case, have reached so elab-

orate and separate a development in the United States that their affinity with English dialectic mutations has grown almost imperceptible. And there are corresponding peculiarities in the adjective, in the verb and even in some of the prepositions. Not one of the parts of speech, indeed, has failed to yield something of its English rigidity of tense and case to the special demands of the American people.

But let us begin with the simple personal pronouns. Here is an attempt at their declension in American:

First Person		
	Singular	Plural
Nom.	I	We
Poss.	My	Our (ourn)
Obj.	Me	Us
Second Person		
Nom.	You	Yous
Poss.	Your (yourn)	Your (yourn)
Obj.	You	Yous
Third Person		
Nom.	He, she, it	They
Poss.	His, her, hisn, hern, its	Their (theirn)
Obj.	Him, her, it	Them

So far, so good. This declension accounts for many familiar Americanisms. For example, "Give everybody whatever is theirn." For example, "Yous usen't to use it." For example, "Don't mix up ourn and yourn." And many others of a familiar sound. But a brief inspection is sufficient to show that it does *not* account for a form equally familiar—to wit, the form revealed in "Us fellows have often went broke." Here, it must be plain, we have a transfer of *us*, in the first person plural, from the objective case to the nominative. And much the same phenomenon is seen in "Them men are Swedes," and in "Him and her are brothers and sisters," and in "Us and them are neighbors." An American does not say "*we* and *they*"; he says "*us* and *them*." He does not say "*those* men"; he says "*them* men." He does not use "*he* and *she*" as a subject; he uses "*him* and *her*."

Well, what does all this indicate? It indicates, in the first place, that the plural pronoun in American, whenever it is hitched to its corresponding noun so as to form the subject of a sentence,

takes the inflectional form of the objective case. It indicates, in the second place, that two or more singular pronouns, whenever they are joined together by prepositions for the same purpose, undergo the same change. The which may be reduced, for convenience, to a single rule—the first scientific contribution, so far as I know, to the grammar of the American language—to wit:

Whenever an American pronoun used as the subject of a sentence is joined to its corresponding noun or to another pronoun, it takes the form of the objective case.

But is this the whole story? Isn't it a fact that certain plural pronouns undergo the same change, even when standing alone? For example, what of "*Them* are the kind I like"? What of "*Them* were the men I seen"? Here we have plain inflections to the objective form, and yet the pronouns stand alone and are not connected with their corresponding nouns. An apparent extension of our pioneer rule, but, after all, it is only apparent. The truth is that in both of these examples, and in all other such examples, the corresponding noun is either concealed by ellipses, or standing a step or two away. "*Them* are the kind I like" is merely a shorter form of "*Them kind* are the *kind* I like," and three times out of five the American actually inserts the missing noun. And even when he doesn't, he commonly makes up for it with interest by inserting a more specific noun, as in "*Them men* (or *oysters*, or *poker hands*, or *false teeth*, or *clergymen*) are the kind I like." In brief, this change of the plural pronoun to the objective case is fully covered by our rule, and so no extension is needed to account for it. When the plural pronoun stands indubitably alone—i. e., when its corresponding noun would be obviously redundant, or must be imagined as part of a preceding and wholly separate sentence—then it retains the nominative form. The American does not say "*Them* went home"; he says, "*They* went home." And in the same way he does not say, "*Us* are soused," he says, "*We* are soused."

If we now turn to the verbs, we shall find a similar disharmony between English and American, though here the American forms are often matched by identical forms in archaic or dialectic English. The American perfect participle of *get*, for example, was in good usage in England in Dryden's day and is still encountered in a number of county dialects. But not many educated Englishmen of today use *gotten*: they prefer the more euphonious if less regular *got*. In the same way they prefer the irregular *struck* to the regular *stricken* as the perfect participle of *to strike* in the passive voice. An English lawyer moves in court that certain testimony be struck out; his predecessor in Coke's day moved that it be stricken out; his American colleague of today clings to the older form. Thus with other American conjugations. The tendency to make irregular verbs regular, as revealed in such forms of the past tense as *throwed*, *knowed*, *blowed*, *drawed* and *heard*, is one which spoken American shows in common with most of the other colloquial forms of English. And so is the tendency to bring the irregular conjugation of verbs of similiar sound into harmony, as, for instance, in the use of *skun* for *skinned*, obviously a false analogy from *spin* and *spun*, *win* and *won*.

But beside these widespread aberrations, met with in Irish-English, Scotch, Cockney and other English dialects as well as in American, there are a number of American forms, in use from end to end of the United States, which are native to the soil. For example, the use of *left* as the past tense form of *to let* and the similar transformation of *to fine* into *found*. It is true enough that an American newspaper reporter, deliberately trying to write book English, will say that a magistrate *let* one prisoner off with a warning and *fined* another a dollar, but it is equally true that every policeman in the courtroom will say that the first prisoner was *left* off and that the other was *found*. But perhaps I had better present a few typical American conjugations, illustrative of this and other points:

Present	Past	Perfect Participle
Arrive	Arrove	Arriven
Be	Bean	Ben
Begin	Begun	Began
Bring	Brung	Brang
Bust	Busted	Bust
Climb	Clumb	Clumb
Cling	Clang	Clung
Creep	Crep	Crep
Come	Come	Came
Crow	Crowed	Crew
Deal	Dole	Dole
Dive	Dove (<i>pro. doave</i>)	Dove
Do	Done	Did
Drag	Drug	Drug
Draw	Drawed	Drew
Drink	Drunk	Drank
Drown	Drowneded	Drowneded
Eat	Et	Ate
Fight	Fought	Fitten
Fine	Found	Found
Fling	Flang	Flung
Flow	Flew	Flown
Fly	Flew	Flew
Freeze	Froze	Friz
Get	Got	Gotten
Give	Give	Gave
Go	Went	Went
Hear	Heerd	Heerd
Heat	Het	Het
Hide	Hidden	Hid
Keep	Kep	Kep
Know	Knowned	Knew
Lend	Loaned	Lent
Lie	Laid	Laid
Ring	Rung	Rang
Run	Run	Ran
Say	Sez	Said
See	Seen	Saw
Sing	Sung	Sang
Sit	Set	Set
Skin	Skun	Skun
Slide	Slid	Slidden
Sling	Slang	Slung
Sneak	Snuk	Snuk
Spin	Span	Spun
String	Strang	Strang
Sting	Stang	Stung
Swim	Swum	Swam
Swing	Swang	Swung
Throw	Throwed	Threwn
Wring	Wrang	Wrung

Here we have examples of a number of characteristically American peculiarities of conjugation. For example, there is the confusion of words apparently identical, such as *fine* and *find*, leading to the use of *found* for *fined*. Again, there is the drawing of false analogies between words which rhyme but are otherwise unrelated, such as *deal* and *steal*, leading to *dole* instead of *dealt*, and *dive* and *drive*, leading to *dove* instead of *dived*. Yet again, there is the persistence of an original vowel sound through

one or both inflections, as in *give* and *hear*. Yet again, there is the smoothing down and easing of speech by apocope, as in the use of *kep* for *kebt*, *crep* for *crept* and *het* for *heated*. Yet again, there is the transfer of an error in the conjugation of one word to the conjugation of other words of similar sound, as in the case of *brung* and *rung* as past tense forms of *bring* and *ring*: a borrowing from the American inflection of *sing*, which is *sung* and not *sang* in the past tense. Yet again, there is the obvious tendency to heighten the effectiveness of speech by substituting harsh, brassy vowels for soft ones, as in the use of *stang*, *swang*, *slang* and *flang*. Finally, there is the persistent transfer of the English perfect participle into the simple past tense, and *vice versa*, as in the use of *throwed* for *threw* and *drawed* for *drew*, and in the confusion of *did* and *done*, *saw* and *seen*, *run* and *ran*, *drank* and *drunk*.

This last tendency is visible in Irish-English and Cockney as well as in American, but in no other dialect is the change carried to such lengths. There is gradually growing up in American, indeed, a habit of introducing it into the conjugation of *all* irregular verbs, regardless of whether their inflections are otherwise orthodox or not. Thus, an American is now very apt to say "I *taken* a trip," and "I *written* a letter," just as glibly as he says "I *seen*" or "I *done*," and in the opposite direction he is almost as full of "I would have *wrote*" and "I oughtn't to have *took*," as he is of "I have *began*" and "The milkman has *came*." The causes of this muddling of tenses I do not profess to know: all I want to point out is its effect of simplifying grammar. When the past form of *to write* is changed from *wrote* to *writ* or *written*, the verb becomes measurably more regular, following the example of *to bite*, and so its use becomes measurably easier. I am well aware that there is a corresponding lessening of regularity in the past perfect, but that lessening is far from compensatory, for the American keeps out of the past perfect tense as much as possible, just as he keeps out of the present perfect and the future perfect. These com-

plex tenses are opposed to the genius of his language, which has ease of use as its first principle, and no doubt he will get rid of them entirely by and by. Already, indeed, he has well-nigh abandoned the present perfect tense: he never says "I have dined," but always "I am through." And the future perfect exists in American only as a fossil. Even the American newspapers, which still profess to cling to English grammar, though they make frank use of the American vocabulary, are now almost free of "will haves." I have been unable to find a single specimen in two issues of the *New York Sun*. The simple future tense serves all purposes nearly as well, and in spoken American it is used exclusively.

Now add to this movement toward simplicity a strong habit of strengthening the original forms of verbs by elisions, reinforcements and other changes, as in *bust*, *unloosen*, *ketch*, *et*, *sez*, *rile* and *rench* (for *rinse*); and an equally strong habit of manufacturing entirely new ones out of nouns, adjectives or the empty air—for example, *bulldoze*, *lynch*, *stump*, *lexow*, *electrocute*, *muss*, *swat*, *filibuster*, *gerrymander*, *dicker*, *boost*, *belly-ache*, *boodle* and *bluff*—and you come to an understanding, not only of the growing philological autonomy of the spoken American of the common people, but also of its peculiar vigor. It is, indeed, an extraordinarily succinct, nervous and clangorous speech. None other of modern times is better adapted to the terse and dramatic conveyance of ideas. It would be impossible, in orthodox English, or in French or German or Italian, to get so much of assurance and command and finality into three words as the American gets into "Swat the fly!" The Englishman says "I shall"; the American says "I will"—and ten times the resolution and certainty of the English form is in the American. "I went broke" is better than "I was broken"; "het up" is vividder than "heated up"; even Professor Lounsbury admits the vast superiority of "It's me" to "It is I." Finally, compare "He saw his duty and he did it" and "He seen his duty and he done it": the one is

a mere statement of fact, the other is a statement plus an enthusiastic ratification and defiance.

That American is much richer than English, even than the loosest spoken English, in concise and picturesque words, precipitating ideas of considerable complexity into one or two *sforzando* syllables, must be evident to anyone who studies the vocabularies of the two languages. The former is full of comparatively new words—nouns, verbs and adjectives—which serve a very real need of expression, but are yet looked at askance by the English, as outlaws of speech. Of such sort are the nouns *crank*, *boss*, *bluff*, *boodle*, *graft*, *dicker*, *hobo*, *lasso* and *stamped* and their derivative verbs and adjectives. All of these are in universal use in America, but the English still regard them as slang. A few such American words—for example, *caucus*, *hoodlum*, *lynch*, *maverick* and *canoe*—have gone over into English, but a hundred times as many remain purely American. An Englishman, unless he has been in the United States, does not know the meaning of *sucker*, *wire-puller*, *crackerjack*, *wildcat*, *shanty*, *picayune*, *mugwump*, *bonehead*, *powwow*, *windup*, *deadhead*, *cutoff*, *highbinder*, *holdup*, *grub-stake*, *lockout*, *gerrymander*, *filibuster*, *logroller*, *hammock* and *ranch*. The ideas conveyed by such words, vividly and economically, he can convey only by long and flaccid circumlocutions. The language he speaks is hunkerously inhospitable, in these later years, to reinforcement from without. Time was when every British adventurer brought home new words, but that time is past. When the Boer War gave the language *mafeking*, the word was immediately attacked, and today it survives only as a vulgarism. But American is constantly absorbing the foreign words brought in by immigrants, just as the American people are constantly absorbing the superstitions, prejudices and *pediculidæ* of those immigrants. Such needed words as *rathskeller*, *bock-beer*, *pumpernickel*, *sauer-kraut*, *frankfurter* and *wienerwurst* came into it from the German, and such words as *café* (pronounced *kaif*) and *fête* (pronounced *feet*)

from the French, and in the same way many Yiddish words, such as *kosher* and *gonov*, for example, are fast forcing themselves into general usage.

What is more important, American is being enriched constantly by new words of native origin, and particularly by new words formed by compounding. The facility with which these agglutinates are manufactured does not result in clumsiness, as in German, but in an increasing clarity and ease of utterance. Such compounds as *cut-off*, *lock-out*, *ice-cream*, *log-roller*, *hold-up*, *horse-sense*, *ward-heeler*, *hog-wash*, *grab-bag*, *desk-room*, *dead-head*, *skin-game*, *wind-up*, *spell-binder*, *wild-cat*, *stamping-ground*, *wire-puller*, *monkey-shine*, *office-seeker*, *job-holder*, *kill-joy*, *crazy-quilt*, *died-in-the-wool* and *rabble-rouser* have not only a plentiful picturesqueness, but also a genuine value. The language is the richer and the more fluent for their invention: it grows in economy as it grows in vocabulary. And that same striving for vividness and forcefulness, when applied to the sentence instead of to the single word, produces the extraordinarily lush and vigorous thing called American slang. Not even French can show a slang with more in it of novelty, daring and penetrating impudence. Such phrases as *like greased lightning*, *like a snowball in hell*, *a land office business*, *by the skin of his teeth*, *beaten to a frazzle*, *like a dirty deuce*, *he handed me a lemon*, *from hell to breakfast*, *Pike's Peak or bust*, and *till the cows come home*, are apt, lucid and racy of the soil. And so are all the minor coins of American phrase—*to make good*, *to go back on*, *to face the music*, *to peter out*, *to fill the bill*, *to bury the hatchet*, *to chew the rag*, *to hit the booze*, *to kick the bucket*, *to scratch the ticket*, *to stump the state*, *to acknowledge the corn*, *to nurse a grouch*, *small potatoes*, *marble heart*, *glad rags*, *on the fence*, *on the hog*, *down and out*, *under the weather*, *in the neck*, *cold snap*, *up in the air*, *glad eye*, *second time on earth*. What language has ever produced a more incisive and detaining phrase than *yellow journal*? Or better humorous words than *skedaddle*, *sock-dolager*, *guyascutis*, *scalawag* and *ram-bunchious*? Or more useful abbreviations

than *O. K.*, *N. G.* and *P. D. Q.*?

Naturally enough, a tongue so remarkably hospitable to reinforcements, however humble in origin, is noticeably rich in similes. There is scarcely a noun or adjective in common use, indeed, that hasn't at least two exact synonyms, instantly understood by ninety per cent. of all Americans. And about such universal words as *dead*, *married*, *food*, *whiskers*, *clergyman*, *drink*, *drunk* and *girl* there cluster picturesque equivalents in almost countless swarms. I take, for example, the word *whiskers*. In Farmer and Henley's Dictionary of Slang and Colloquial English I can find but a dozen or so synonyms for it, and most of these are really special words used to describe facial flora of peculiar design, such as *mutton chops*, *imperial* and *goatee*. But here are no less than fifty American synonyms for *whiskers* in the general sense, and every one of them, I venture to say, would be immediately intelligible to eight Americans out of ten:

Alfalfa	Ivy
Arbutus	Jimpsons
Asparagus	Jungle
Bib	Kraut
Brush	Lilacs
Bunch	Mattress
Bush	Moss
Buzzers	Muff
Chest protector	Muffler
Chinlash	Oleanders
Crape	Plush
Cyprus	Seaweed
Dogwood	Shrubbery
Duster	Slaw
Excelsior	Soup trap
Ferns	Spaghetti
Fine-cut	Spinach
Flax	Sprouts
Foliage	Sweet Williams
Furs	Tanglefoot
Fuzz	Tolstois
Grandpas	Vines
Grass	Weeping willows
Greens	Wild oats
Hedge	Windshield

Slang? To be sure. But a language such as American, the common tongue of a curious and talkative people, is necessarily composed largely, if not chiefly, of what the intransigent school teacher would call slang. Slang in itself, it must be obvious, does not differ essentially from any other material of

speech. All that may be validly said against it is that it is new, that it has not yet won the support of the conventional. No other objection uncovers a character that you will not find in equal flower in wholly orthodox metaphor. Say that it is extravagant and far-fetched and you also attack some of our noblest similes and hyperboles. Say that it is vulgar and you also attack Shakespeare's "There's the rub," a figure grounded upon the fact that a tight shoe is uncomfortable and causes corns. No man can write English without using the slang of yesteryear; no man can speak English without using more or less of the slang of today. The distinguished trait of the American is simply his tendency to use slang without any false sense of impropriety, his eager hospitality to its most audacious novelties, his ingenuous yearning to augment the conciseness, the sprightliness, and, in particular, what may be called the dramatic punch of his language. It is ever his effort to translate ideas into terms of overt acts, to give the intellectual a visual and striking quality. The idea of defeat, of bafflement, of ludicrous defrauding, he puts into the saying that he has been handed a lemon. The idea that whiskers are, in some subtle sense, ridiculous—that the man who devotes care to their nurture indulges a foolish weakness—this he makes vivid by a host of synonyms giving concrete and visual embodiment to the concept of comedy. And so he deals, too, with other complex and difficult concepts—for example, that of sexual charm. The English poet, feeling the inadequacy of mere description, goes to timid metaphor and calls his best girl a lily or a rose; the everyday American, moved by the same impulse and less shackled by fastidious restraints, calls her a peach, a daisy, a pansy, a pippin or a bird.

Always his one desire is to make speech lucid, lively, dramatic, staccato, arresting, clear—and to that end he is willing to sacrifice every purely æsthetic consideration. He judges language as he judges poetry, not at all by its grace of form but wholly by its clarity and poignancy of content. He has no true

sense of the sough and sweetness of words: all he can understand is their crash and brilliance. He is like—or, more accurately, he is himself—a musician with an abnormal development of feeling for rhythm and resonance, and no feeling whatever for phrasing and tone-color. Thus he is ever willing, on the one hand, to adopt words and expressions that are harsh and barbarous in themselves, such as *sour-belly*, *hog-wash*, *shin-dig*, *frazzle*, *scalawag* and *bulldoze*, and on the other hand he is constantly boiling down and making more pungent the words that belong to orthodox English. To an Englishman there is a sharp distinction between *don't* and *doesn't*; to an American *don't* seems just as proper in the singular as in the plural. In the same way, he always uses *won't* for the more difficult *sha'n't*, and always substitutes *ain't*, a monosyllable, for *aren't*, a dissyllable. Years ago he turned *burst* into *bust*, *copper* into *cop*, and *confidence* into *con*; of late he has continued the process by turning *bunco*, a simplified derivative of *buncombe*, into the still simpler *bunk*. The more subdued forms of the vowels he rejects in favor of sterner, more discordant forms. Thus the short *e* is yanked out of *deaf*, *chest* and *kettle*, and the words become *deef*, *chist* and *kitlle*. Thus the English *a* in *sauce* gives way to a more American *a* and the word becomes *sass*. Thus the diphthong in *roil*, *choice* and *hoist* is reduced to a simple vowel, and we have *rile*, *chice* and *hist*. This last tendency was early noted by visiting Englishmen. It is probable, indeed, that it was more powerful two generations ago than it is today—as witness *j'int*, *sile*, *p'int*, *jine*, *bile*, *ile* and *rej'ice*, now seldom heard—but it is still far from decadent. To the American a *quoit* is yet a *quait*, and *Hofbräu*, it is probable will always remain *Huffbrow*.

Such is American, a language pre-eminent among the tongues of the earth for its eager hospitality to new words, and no less for its compactness, its naked directness, and its disdain of all academic obfuscations and restraints. The English from which it sprung was already a language of notably simple grammar—

a language that had been gradually shedding its inflections for five hundred years. But American has progressed much faster than English. As we have seen, it has already reduced its tenses from six to three, and broken down the old barriers between the nominative case and the objective, and brought about an occasional marriage between singular and plural, and declared war upon the superfluous consonant and the disguised vowel. How far it will go in each of these several directions, and in new directions perhaps yet to be indicated, is beyond all prophecy. On the one hand, its tendency to reduce grammar to mere common sense is obviously very powerful, but on the other hand, its natural evolution is constantly combated by the conservatism of school teachers, who cling fanatically to book

English and devote their best energies to rehabilitating it. To what issue that war will come remains to be seen. On the one hand the spread of schools may bring the teachers a substantial victory, and American may recoalesce with English, in grammar if not in vocabulary. But on the other hand, the teachers may have to make a frank compromise, as the newspapers have already begun to make it, and as a few daring scholars—for example, the late Prof. William James, of Harvard—have showed signs of making it. If such a compromise is ever reached, the result, in short order, will be an entirely new language, as distinct from orthodox English as the *langue d'oïl* was from the *langue d'oc*, or as Russian is from that compound of Slavic, Arabic and Greek elements which goes by the name of modern Bulgarian.



THE BARTENDER

By Joyce Kilmer

BEHIND his head a mirror gleams;
 On either side a pile of glasses.
 Across the bar he deals out dreams
 As Life, his thrall, before him passes.
 Strange liquids, all with light a-quiver,
 To him as helpless playthings are;
 They dart through air, a triple river,
 And rest commingled on the bar.

How many loud and hectic years
 Have taught this cunning to his fingers?
 The ghost of countless smiles and tears
 About his linen jacket lingers.
 Perhaps among his handmaids lying,
 In purple robe and crown of vine,
 Young Dionysus laughs, espying
 His ancient priest, his ancient shrine.



ALL bad plays are—tragedies!

THE GREAT CAROUSAL

By Louis Untermeyer

O H, do not think me dead when I
Beneath a bit of earth shall lie;
Think not that aught can ever kill
My arrogant and stubborn will.
My buoyant strength, my eager soul,
My stern desire shall keep me whole
And lift me from the drowsy deep . . .
I shall not even yield to Sleep.
For Death can never take from me
My warm and restless energy;
He shall not dare to touch one part
Of the gay challenge of my heart.
And I shall laugh at him, and lie
Happy beneath a laughing sky;
For I have fought too joyously
To let the conqueror conquer me—
I know that, after strengthening strife,
Death cannot quench my love of life,
Rob me of my dear self, my ears
Of music or my eyes of tears . . .
No, Death shall come in friendlier guise;
The cloths of darkness from my eyes
He shall roll back, and lo, the sea
Of Silence shall not cover me.
He shall make soft my final bed,
Stand, like a servant, at my head;
And, thrilled with all that Death may give,
I shall lie down to rest—and live . . .

And I shall know within the earth
A softer but a deeper mirth.
The wind shall never troll a song
But I shall hear it borne along,
And echoed long before he passes
By all the little unborn grasses.
I shall be clasped by roots and rains,
Feeding, and fed by, living grains;
There shall not be a single flower
Above my head but bears my power;
And every butterfly or bee
That tastes the flower shall drink of me.

THE SMART SET

Ah, we shall share a lip-to-lip
Carousal and companionship!

The storm, like some great blustering lout,
Shall play his games with me and shout
His joy to all the countryside.
Autumn, sun-tanned and April-eyed,
Shall scamper by and send his hosts
Of leaves, like brown and merry ghosts,
To frolic over me; and stones
Shall feel the dancing in their bones.
And red-cheeked Winter too shall be
A jovial bedfellow for me;
Setting the startled hours ringing
With boisterous tales and lusty singing.
And, like a mother that has smiled
For years on every tired child,
Summer shall hold me in her lap . . .
And when the root stirs, and the sap
Climbs anxiously beyond the boughs,
And all the friendly worms carouse,
Then, oh, how proudly, we shall sing
Bravuras for the feet of Spring!

And I shall lie forever there
Like some great king, and watch the fair
Young Spring dance on for me, and know
That love and rosy valleys glow
Where'er her blithe feet touch the earth.
And headlong joy and reckless mirth,
Seeing her footsteps, shall pursue.
Oh, I shall watch her smile and strew
Laughter and life with either hand.
And every quiver of the land
Shall pierce me, while a joyful wave
Beats in upon my radiant grave.
Aye, like a king in deathless state
I shall be throned, and contemplate
The dying of the years; the vast
Vague panorama of the past;
The march of centuries; the surge
Of ages . . . but the deathless urge
Shall stir me always, and my will
Shall laugh to keep me living still;
Thrilling with every call and cry—
Too much in love with life to die!
Content to touch the earth, to hear
The whisper of each waiting year,
To watch the stars go proudly by,
To speed the timid grass, and lie
Sharing with every moment's breath,
The rich eternity of Death.

JERRY

By Barry Benefield

THE Walton plantation and all the woods about it lay sick under the feverish Louisiana sun. Jerry Stiles, with his hoe on his shoulder, climbed the woodslot fence and started for a backward cotton patch on the other side of it. Mr. Will Walton, sitting on the front gallery of the "big house," fifty yards away, saw the young negro and was pleased; for Jerry, being a share farmer, was earning for both when he worked.

In his path, as he crossed the woodslot under the wilted gray oak trees, was a still hammock in which Miss Sarah lay asleep, one slippered foot touching the ground. He stopped to gaze at her. He knew this was not "fittin'"; he felt guilty; yet he stood and stared. It was instinctive homage to beauty.

Suddenly there dropped into his view a blotch in the air—a huge, black tarantula lowering itself from an overhanging limb above the girl's head. To his excited imagination, filled with the Southern negro's exaggerated superstitions about snakes, bats and the like, the gigantic spider appeared to be four times as large as it really was, a fuzzy gob of venomous malevolence. As even to touch Miss Sarah was sin to him, he believed its bite was death.

He stood some six feet away from the hammock; the spider hung two feet above the white girl's head, slipping gradually down through the windless air toward her slightly opened mouth. If he called to her she would jump up and strike her head against it, exciting it to fury by the shock. If he threw something at the tarantula he might miss it and by breaking the thread drop it upon her.

All the woodcraft he had taught him that his upstanding bulk was dangerous, that a sudden rush forward would stimulate the spider to instant action. So he eased himself to the ground and started wriggling toward the hammock. As his body dragged along the dusty grass a sharp-edged stone came under his chest, turning over as he proceeded, cutting through his brown-striped hickory shirt to the ribs beneath, bruising its way along his belly. He had no time to lose in removing it or maneuvering around it.

A gasp of stale wind shook the wilted leaves, and the heavy gob of poison swung tremulously over Miss Sarah's face; Jerry set his muscles to jump. Then the spider ran rapidly up his thread three or four feet, and the panting negro was about to yell for joy when it slid down to within six inches of her forehead, twisting and whirling in the sour breeze.

"Jerry! Jerry! What the hell are you doing?"

It was Mr. Will shouting from the front gallery. In this voice the bruised, bleeding, breathless negro recognized with a shock of bitterness a suspicion the possibility of which had not entered his mind.

He did not take his eyes from the tarantula, but he heard the footsteps of the white man going rapidly into the hall. In the next moment he knew that Mrs. Walton, attracted by her husband's shout, was on the front steps; her scream did not surprise him now.

The spider slipped down an inch or two nearer Miss Sarah. Jerry wriggled forward faster. It did not occur to him to do anything else.

The tarantula dropped. Before it had touched the bare, white throat Jerry had jumped. In a flash he saw the fuzzy black blotch scuttling toward the opening of the dress. In the next throb of consciousness he knew that it was falling toward the grass a mass of mangled legs and oozy body, that still it might, somehow, leap upon her, and that he must pull her away from the horrible thing; he knew that Mr. Will was shouting and running, that Mrs. Walton was screaming, that Miss Sarah was gazing at him in terror and would shriek the next moment. Before she could struggle he turned her loose and stood leaning against a tree, in a reaction of nervelessness, trying to think what to do next. The white dress was fluttering up through the gray woods. The gun boomed, the shot smashed into the tree at his back.

The screams, the booming of the gun, the blasting buckshot, the bellowing of three or four dogs in the back yard, all filled Jerry with panic, and he ran. As he dodged through the trees the gun belched buckshot at him again, but he was not hit. Looking around, he saw Mrs. Walton taking her daughter into her arms at the front yard gate and Mr. Will hurrying back to the house. He knew that the white man was going for more ammunition for his double-barreled shotgun.

Jumping over the woodslat fence, Jerry ran through a patch of drying, rattling corn toward his cabin. His mind was blurred by panic, but there were two things in it clearer than the rest: the necessity of getting out of Mr. Will's sight and the desire to tell some one person the truth that no one except himself knew.

Coming out of the corn behind his garden fence, he ran around that to his back door. It was locked. He doubled around the cabin to the front door under the trellis of gourd vines, and it, too, was locked. Remembering that it was Monday, he judged that his wife Ellen would be down at the spring branch behind the "big house" doing the Walton washing.

A heavy smashing in the browning

corn warned him that Mr. Will, supplied with more buckshot shells for his quick-loading gun, was coming after him. A dog barked in the corn; Jerry jumped the fence in front of his cabin and ran down through a patch of sugar cane, going south. Turning east around behind the stable yard, he bent low and raced across five acres of cotton on a gravelly hillside, plunging into the fringe of sweetgum trees skirting the spring branch on both sides.

In sight ahead of him was the little clearing where the black boiling pot and the washtubs sat. He saw Ellen, with her dress hitched half up to her knees, bending over one of them; he heard the liquid "scrunch-scrunch" of her knuckles on the washboard. Playing in the water above the clearing were his two children, Delia and Jim-Bob. Hearing him crashing through the low bushes, Ellen stood up, her wet hands on her hips.

"Good Lawd, Jerry, whut ails you?" she asked when he had come up to her.

It had not occurred to him that he was gasping for breath. Now he opened his mouth to tell the truth to someone who would listen to him, and his words all gushed out together. His eyes were stretched wide and white. His black skin was oozing sweat. Ellen strode close to him.

"My Lawd, Jerry! My Lawd!" This was a plea for an answer, but he could not make his words come out slow and right. And he could not wait—he ought to be getting away from Mr. Will. She laid her hands pressingly on his shoulders.

"Lay down, honey," she pleaded. "Lay down on de grass yondeh by de branch. I'm goin' for he'p."

Before he could stop her she had started up the hill through the rows of cotton, calling behind her: "Lay down, honey; you is sick. I'm goin' for Mr. Will."

He sat down on an upturned tub, the thought flitting through his head that maybe with Ellen to help him he might get to speak to Mr. Will. Delia and Jim-Bob came up out of the branch, their bare legs dripping, and stood

watching him curiously, anxiously. To them this was new conduct for him. On the hill above the cotton patch Jerry heard dogs barking and men shouting. Leaping up, he saw, through the fringe of trees, coming down the hillside, Mr. Will and three negro men of the plantation, followed by Ellen throwing her arms frantically about, and six or seven bird and rabbit dogs. He wavered in resolution; panic shattered through him; he jumped the branch and went racing southward along its branch among the concealing trees.

Someone in the party had seen him leap the branch. A scattering load of shot tore through the leaves behind him; he heard a scream. That was Ellen. He hesitated, ran on. He was not hurt. He wanted to get away from gunshots, from fighting, from blood, from the screaming of women and children.

In his seething mind there was a general plan for the immediate future. Dimly he saw it; the details were blurred. Down in the deep woods for the night; tomorrow on across Batouche Bayou into the next parish. On then toward New Orleans; sawmills would give him work.

From time to time a gun roared behind him, the shot ripping through the green leaves like paper. He kept to the trees that followed the course of the branch to the southward, for on either side of it the land was covered with cotton hardly knee high. The dogs caught up with him now and then, but they knew him and frolicked on ahead, thinking that he was chasing something.

Finally the branch slipped under the outermost rail fence; the sweetgums lost themselves among the pines and oaks beyond; Jerry plunged into the deep forest. The dry straw on the ground wore the soles of his shoes as slick as glass. It seemed that he was sliding back almost as fast as he went forward. Going down a gentle hill, his feet shot from under him and he rolled to the bottom, his body stopping itself against a soft, rotten log.

He lay there, his muscles relaxed, listening. The barking of the dogs indicated that the party was now going

back through the field toward the big house. Sitting up, Jerry strained his ears to make sure. In the field he heard a whistle further back than he had last seen his pursuers. In the woods above him there was no sound of running men. The barking of the dogs was growing fainter.

Jerry lay back down, gasping in the ecstasy of rest. It occurred to him that Mr. Will had returned for white men, for horses, guns, bloodhounds. Meanwhile he would rest.

A light breeze stirred gently through the sleepy-smelling forest. The pine straw under him was dry and soft, the log against his left side was cool and soft, the specks of sky away up beyond the interlaced branches of the trees were blue and soft. All about him the woods were sighing soft, sad whispers. From a limb above him a tiny white spider came sliding down his invisible thread. The great, broad-shouldered, loose-jointed black man nuzzled his nose into the bow of his arm and cried like a child. After a while he was asleep.

A squirrel prowling over his body woke him. He sat up and looked around wondering. His eyes were drawn and burning. Touching his fingers to them, he felt little patches of dried salt. His consciousness connected itself with his past; he dropped his head, moaning vaguely, "Lawdy, lawdy, lawdy!"

Now the woods were darkening. The air was hardening with a damp chill. Here and there a whip-poor-will scratched stealthily in the leaves, was still, scratched again. Jerry got to his feet slowly, all his muscles stiff, his bruised chest and belly aching. Stealing back into the Walton plantation, he got a meal of green corn from a late patch, came out into the forest again and walked on down the descending land toward the bayou.

Two miles brought him to the stream, and it was night. He followed the path along the bank another mile until he found the Pierre Point Spring. There he made a fire, roasted the corn and ate it. Above the dancing flames a million mosquitoes hovered, a pale, seething aureole to the red fire. Out in the slow,

black stream that lapped lazily against the land and fallen logs a fish now and then leaped into the air, fell with a playful slap on the face of the water and sank with a delighted gurgle.

Lacing his arms about his legs, Jerry rested his chin on his knees and stared into the writhing fire. The bloodhounds—he wondered how long it would take Mr. Will to get them. Sheriff Coggins, in Belleport, had a pack that he kept more for sport than for professional use. Young town negroes, Jerry knew, often earned fifty cents in an afternoon by running ahead of the hounds to keep them in practice. It was ten miles from Mr. Will's to Belleport; and then the hounds might be on another job.

Presently he got up and started walking down the path along the bank. He must as soon as possible get as far away as he could, anyhow. On the other side of the bayou, here, all the nearby ground was low and marshy, spotted with bogs, thick with underbrush, impossible to run on. Seven miles down, he remembered, the southern bank rose as high and as hard as the northern bank; there he would make a crossing.

He stepped along briskly. His muscles loosened under the exercise. The glow of the food filtered through him. An impulse came to him to raise his voice and yodel into the shadows the sad songs that negroes sing when they are happy. He did not sing. The moon rose after a while; the black woods went pale and ghastly.

Out of the incessant murmur of little night sounds among the trees Jerry's ears singled out a tiny new sound. He could not tell if it was a sigh near him or a roar far away. He stopped. He caught it again. Away back up the bayou a dog was barking. There were several—his ears made out differences of tone. Above the gray rim of whisperings close around him there lifted the golden flare of a hunter's horn. Boys out coon hunting, maybe; coons from the bottom lands were eating the corn in the fields. Jerry broke into a steady trot.

The path was broad and hard. The rise and fall of his body made the woods

and the water run with him. The tiny new sounds stuck in his ears. If he halted they grew fast. Sitting down on a log, he pulled off his heavy shoes and threw them into the bayou; they only hindered him, his feet were hard.

He jogged on, maintaining his regular trot. The hounds were in his ears. He could tell they were hounds now. They were coming down the bayou, no mistake. His blue cottonade trousers flapped together trippingly as he trotted. He stopped, rolled them above his knees, went on.

He detected the increasing fierce joy in the voices of the hounds as they followed an easy and fresh trail. He zigzagged out into the woods to the left, made three or four wide intersecting circles, came back to the bayou, followed it on.

There rose before him a white shrine in the woods—Crebiche Lake, oblong slough filled in the summer with three inches of water and ten inches of mud. Jerry plunged into one side, and instead of going straight across walked the entire length of it before coming out, the sticky ooze sucking noisily at his feet. An easy trail! The big, black man smiled, like a child, in untimely and illogical pride. The maneuvers had made him go forward more slowly; the hounds had grown in his ears. His mouth settled tight and serious.

Though the night was damp and chilly, Jerry was hot. He tore open the throat of his shirt. The mud from the slough had already dried on his bare legs below the knees. It cracked loose in cakes, hung pendulous for a painful moment by the hairs, wrenched off.

He was keeping to the hard path by the bayou, going as fast as he could without spending all his strength at once. Still the hounds were growing in his ears. Hesitating, he looked across the water at the far bank. The first good crossing, he knew, was four miles further down. But he walked a tree into the water and swam to the other side.

There was no traveling as yet over there. The thick underbrush tore through his shirt and trousers, jabbing bleeding

little holes into his skin. Every few minutes there was another mud-filled slough to cross. Ploughing through one, he sank to his hips. On the far side he fell to the ground. A swarm of whining swamp mosquitoes settled on him.

His forward movement was too slow. The hounds were growing too fast in his ears.

"O Lawd! O Lawd!" he moaned in vague appeal.

Struggling to his feet, he bore back to the left. The bayou rose before him again, a silver ribbon running through the trees. He leaped into it, swimming with his arms before his feet had left the ground.

The hounds were at Crebiche Lake, half a mile behind him. They were having trouble. They no longer bellowed in easy triumph. They were not moving ahead. Knowing the ways of hounds, he easily imagined them running about the slough's edge, whimpering in distress. Faintly he heard the posse cheering them on.

"Go, dog, go!"

It came floating down the stream to him.

"Yeah, dog, go!"

Voices of men did not worry him. For a few sweet moments, anyhow, the dogs were out of his ears.

"Oh, lawdy, lawdy!" he whispered in gratitude.

The moon stood straight above him. The water rippled and lapped against the porous, gurgling bank at his right. To his left the woods whirled with the incessant insect life, sounding always so busy and so sad. Now he noticed these things. The hounds were still and he was going forward—"not fas', O Lawd, not fas', but fas'er 'n dem."

A rapturous roar came to him, quickly followed by others. One of the hounds had struck his trail this side of Crebiche Lake. Now they were all in his ears again. Yet they had the bayou to cross. Over there they would lose the trail in all those sloughs. Let 'em beller!

He only walked now, his body bent forward as if he bore a heavy load. The hounds were once more still. He knew they had come to his crossing.

"Make 'em lose me, Lawd, make 'em lose me!"

It seemed to him certain that they would. If his simple maneuver at Crebiche Lake had caused them so much trouble, all those mud ponds across the bayou must put them off entirely. He wanted to shout out just one little holler, but there was not breath enough. He felt that he was justified in sitting down for a minute, but he forced himself on. His head wobbled from side to side. Each lifted leg was a load. He stumbled, failed to recover, sank to his knees, keeled over on his right side. The hounds were out of his ears; he lay without motion.

"Lawd, yo' chile is a-weary in de bones. De dogs is los'."

This was a plea for pardon. He lay there, his head resting on his arm. A tense stiffness was hardening through him. His chest was blasting like a furnace. A wide leaf of swamp grass stuck against his mouth. Opening his lips, he sucked off the dew, sighing, "Ah!" The air was thick with scents—old smoke, wet earth, far-away pines, something dead nearby.

"Oh, Lawd!" Jerry moaned indefinitely.

A hound bellowed some five hundred yards behind him. Jerry was up, burning, shivering. His mind leaped upon the explanation: a wily old dog had separated from the pack, had come sniffing on down the hard bank of the bayou, had found his fresh trail. Men were shouting for the dogs across the water. Jerry heard the tramping of horses. The lone hound was roaring joyously on.

Jerry was running now. But he could not keep to his feet. Every time he went down it was harder to come up. There was no longer thought of escaping the men; he only thought of escaping the teeth of the dogs. In his mind the future was bounded by a few minutes.

Forward movement was no longer for him. Dragging himself up from a fall to the ground, he stumbled out to the left among the trees, searching desperately for a low limb. He knew that he could not climb now with his legs.

He came to an oak with a limb touching the earth. Catching hold of that with his arms, he pulled himself up to the body of the tree and sat leaning against it, one arm clasped around it to hold him on.

The lone hound had been joined by the others. Jerry saw them streak into sight from the bushes near the bayou, coming one by one, seeming so slow compared with their bellowing. Now they were raging around underneath his tree, jumping on the bole of it, their eyes flaming green in the dark shade.

The posse came up cautiously. They got off their horses some distance away.

"Look out—he's got his gun!" Jerry heard Mr. Will say.

"I ain't got no gun," he called out.

Twenty or thirty figures surrounded him, still keeping in the protection of the trees.

"I ain't got no gun, gemmen," Jerry called out again, placatingly.

"Come down," someone said.

"Knock dem dogs away den?" asked Jerry.

Letting himself down from the limb by his arms, he dropped. His weary legs crumpled under him; he fell in a heap. A grass rope grated around his neck.

"Oh, Lawd, is dis it?"

"None of that now," he heard Sheriff Coggins shouting, and he opened his eyes. "The hounds are mine and the prisoner's mine," went on the portly officer argumentatively. "I got to make a showing, boys," he went on appealingly. "You help me get him into the jail at Belleport, and after that—" He said no more.

The sheriff was standing in front of him. There was some hesitation, some whispering; then two men lifted the rope off his neck, and he was led toward the horses.

"Hones', gemmen," began Jerry, "I didn't do nothin'. I meant no hahm."

"Shut up!" a dozen voices said impatiently. They tied him in a saddle. Sheriff Coggins riding by his side, the posse strung out before and behind him, the party moved back up the moonlit bayou. Jerry wished that Mr. Will were near him, that he might say a

word to him. But Mr. Will was at the head of the column. Maybe he would come near him before the journey was over; maybe, after all, it was better to wait.

"Ever'body's mad now," he thought charitably.

He recalled the feel of the grass rope on his neck. "I'm obleeged to you," Jerry said to Sheriff Coggins. The big, blond man turned his head away.

Jerry was grateful and hopeful and happy. It seemed that he ought to be very glad that he had been caught. Now the court would give him a lawyer. No, he would hire one himself. Come the morning, he would send for Daniel Decatur. He was young and just starting out, and cheap. "Able, too," Jerry hurried to say to himself, lest he do injustice to the lawyer.

Mr. Decatur would tell his story to Miss Sarah. That would make her remember things between the time she opened her eyes and the time she screamed. Wouldn't the tarantula come back to her then? Wouldn't she understand? And what he said to Ellen might straighten things out when the lawyer had talked to her.

Now he would be back home in a few weeks, maybe in a few days. If they hadn't caught him he might have skunked around in the woods no end of time. Yaas, he was glad the hounds had not lost him. Pretty soon he would lay his body down flat on a bed in the jail, safe and asleep.

"I'm obleeged to you," he felt compelled to say again to the sheriff. Coggins stared at his horse's ears.

A mile back along the bayou, three miles through the thick woods, and then came the pale sandy road to Belleport, ten miles away.

There was no talking in the party. The hounds trotted silently behind. The muffled trampling of the horses' hoofs on the road, the little rattling of the metal trappings, the creaking of the saddles—it was all soothing to the peaceful mind of Jerry. The farmhouses that passed were dark and still. Jerry's eyes closed; he wrenched them open: they closed; he let them stay.

The hollow pounding of the horses on the wooden bridge over Doucet's Creek, five miles from Belleport, woke him for a moment. It seemed but a second after that when someone said, "Get down."

His eyes opened on Belleport's three-storied, red brick jail, ghastly in the failing moonlight. Feeling that his feet were loose, he slid down from the saddle, all his muscles twisted and stiff, all his bones aching, all his body scratched and bruised, his lips murmuring gratefully for the sheriff's ears, "I'm very much obliged to you."

His legs would not hold him up. As he crumpled down on the cement sidewalk two men laid hold of him, and presently he was inside the jail. Somebody said, "It's one o'clock now." Jerry heard a door slammed on him, feet shuffling dimly, the banging of the big door downstairs, the turning of the key. He felt his way to the cot.

"Now to lay de body down—safe an' asleep, Lawd, safe an' asleep."

He was asleep.

A thick thumping was in Jerry's consciousness, seeming very far away, coming nearer rapidly. Now his ears located it; it was at the downstairs door. It had been there all the time. A storm of terror swept out of his mind the clouds of stupor. He leaped up, holding to the upright bars of his cage with both hands, straining his senses to deny his suspicions. The moon was down; the jail was black. The heavy thudding at the main door continued. Through the open windows came a buzzing, like bees.

There was a crash; the buzzing stopped; down the one flight of iron stairs many feet shuffled on the cement floor inside the jail.

"Well, gentlemen, you forced your way in," Jerry heard Dave Theron, the jailer, saying, not angrily. "I resisted as long as I could, didn't I? I did my duty; you all know that. Nobody could do more, could they?"

"You're all right, Dave," somebody said. "Get us a lamp."

Fumbling his way around the cage

until he came to the door, Jerry hurled himself against it, the instinct to run, to escape, in command. Steps were coming up the iron stairs. He got back to the cot and with the strength of desperation tore off one of its legs, the instinct to defend himself, to fight, to die fighting, seizing command.

"It ain't fair—Lawd, it ain't right!"

Shuffling on the stairs, a dim glow there, a smoke-blackened lamp chimney rising into sight, an uplifted arm, the brown-bearded face of Dave Theron, the panting of many men.

"Git back!" shrieked Jerry, in the falsetto of fury and despair. "Don't you come nigh me . . . kill fust man in heah . . . don't come nigh me, I tell you . . . damn liars!" He felt that somehow he had been lied to.

"Go on—he can't do anything," said Mr. Will's voice from below.

The feet rose higher on the stairs. Jerry crouched before the door of the cage, holding the iron pipe poised, his uttermost muscle set to help his arm. White men surrounded his cage. Back of them he heard and dimly saw more. All of them he could not see.

A country negro, the numbers impressed him. The posse had grown to a mob. He could see thirty or forty men: Dave Theron, Mr. Will, Old Mr. Miller and Young Mr. Miller, Pfluger the Belleport butcher, Dr. Pelletier, Paul Pascal and five or six other boys less than twenty, Siragusa the barber; but mostly farmers, he could tell by the look of them, serious men, sober, stern; many he did not know; all with guns.

An impulse came to Jerry to cry out to Mr. Will, to plead for the mercy of time to tell his story. No, not Mr. Will; he looked so fierce. He searched all the faces he knew, hungrily, hopelessly.

He gripped the iron pipe harder, trying to watch on every side of him, his lips drawn back from his white teeth, snarling, sobbing. Paul Pascal stepped toward the door with a key. All that was in Jerry was concentrated on the door.

"Git back, boy; don't you come nigh—"

A smashing blow from behind pitched

Jerry forward. He was conscious of a sudden clamoring among the silent men, a wild scuffling to get into the cage, of hoarse voices cursing, of heels stamping on his face. Clouds swirled smotheringly about the knowing part of him. Blood was trickling, pain was dimming, his light was going out. He hoped this was death.

"Is dis it, Lawd—is dis it?"

Around him low voices talking, his head pounding inside, gray light of a new day: so he had not died. His eyes, already opened, took in his surroundings, familiar to him. The transition from the jail was a blank; he was surprised that he was out in the middle of the main street, near the post office where the big flag always flew. He could not see its red stripes now.

Detail after detail of his condition came clear; veil after veil lifted from his weary faculties. His hands, tied behind him, felt about; he was against a square iron bar driven into the sandy street; the iron was cold. In front of him lay two sledge hammers; to his right the wide door of Soule's blacksmith shop gaped black.

From his feet to his shoulders he was confined tightly. He struggled; only his head and shoulders moved. It was a chain wrapped around him and the iron bar; he heard it clink timidly. Looking down, he saw that wood was piled all around him, reaching above his waist. Near the sledge hammers were some broken goods boxes and oak stove wood. The men kept looking up the street over his head. They were waiting for something.

His pains were so many that he could locate but few of them. His mouth was a blurred mass of agony. Where teeth had been were throbbing caves. He could not shut his mouth tightly; his tongue was swollen. It tasted like brass.

The movements of his lips had started a little stream of fresh blood. He tasted that. It oozed out of the left corner of his mouth, ran slowly down his chin, stopped. He wondered if it would drip right off there or make the curve of

his chin and go on down his neck. It ran down his neck. It was wetting his brown-striped hickory shirt. No matter; it was ruined now, anyhow. The new blood was warm on his heart.

Jerry peered searching among the faces in front of him. Still the day was dim. Scanning the faces, he did not see Sheriff Coggins or Dave Theron. The sheriff had not let them hang him down the bayou; maybe now he was off somewhere trying to get help. Sudden hope flooded through Jerry.

In all the yards set close around the little town the roosters were crowing for the coming of full day. A morning breeze blew up from the south, damp and heavy with the odor of drying corn and summer flowers. Out to Jerry's left, within range of his eyes, was the Palace Restaurant, and above that the telephone exchange. The night telephone girl put her head out of the window, pulled it in quickly again. Jerry felt that she was still peeping out from behind the window jamb; he wished that she was not looking.

Next to the Palace Restaurant was Rosengeldt's general store where he had done all his trading. Mr. Rosengeldt might do something for him at his trial. In front of a window above the store swung the metal sign of Daniel Decatur—"Attorney at Law" written in gold letters—whom he had already chosen as his defender. He would straighten things out.

Restless movements in the crowd around him had brought some new faces forward, and in the brighter light Jerry scrutinized all those in front of him searching for a friend. Among them he saw one that he had not noticed before.

"Is you agin me, too, Mr. Decatur? Den I'm done."

He had meant to say that. He was horrified by the sound that blubbered from his battered mouth and swollen tongue. It made no sense. The blood ran faster down upon his heart. He gulped at the backward flow in his throat to keep from smothering. He relaxed his muscles, drooping his head, all hope gone suddenly, entirely; the

champion that he had chosen had failed him.

But he could not remain long that way. His increasing necessity, the instinct of life, now cried out frantically for more than hope: it demanded faith. His lifted eyes saw down at the end of the street the iron bridge across Batouche Bayou. The road over that led to Crebillon, the next town. That's where Sheriff Coggins had gone for help. It became fixed in his mind that he should hear Sheriff Coggins thundering over the loose-planked bridge to save him. Sheriff Coggins had not let them hang him down the bayou.

Everybody was looking up the street behind him. Jerry wondered what they were waiting for.

"Go hurry those fellows up," said Old Mr. Miller impatiently. Three or four men disappeared from the circle near Jerry.

There was a rumbling on the loose-planked bridge.

In his heart the black man cried, "Oh, Lawd!" That was a stupendous prayer of thanks. Twenty or thirty men picked up their guns and turned to look down the street. They set their guns down and peered again up the street behind Jerry.

Presently O'Hanlon's faded yellow dairy wagon with the faded white cow painted on its sides came slowly up from the bridge and stopped. The little

one-legged Irishman got out, tied the horse to a telephone post and joined the silent, expectant crowd, whispering eager questions.

"Did he confess?" Jerry heard him ask.

"No need to," stated Old Mr. Miller.

"Mr. Walton saw it."

"Here they come!" cried exultant voices. Four men broke through the circle with two square, five-gallon cans of kerosene.

Groaning mightily, Jerry wrenched at his chains. He felt that men were moving around behind him and at his sides. He did not look at them. He gathered all his strength to help his eyes and ears. Still he listened for another thundering on the bridge; still his eyes strained to see the sheriff coming. The sheriff had not let them hang him down the bayou.

He felt himself getting wet from his head down. The oil ran gently. The touch of it was soothing. For a moment the surface pains on his body were easier. He shook his head to clear his eyes and ears. The sheriff would come.

All things near him got to him dimly. His soul was on the bridge. Some talking as of argument . . . soft cheeping of a sparrow . . . red flaring of a match . . . a woman's scream . . . smell of summer flowers . . . smell of burning hair . . . rushing walls of fire . . . shock . . . smothering . . . lunging . . .

"Is dis it, Lawd, is dis . . ."



A MAN learns from experience sometimes, but a woman's experience comes just too late to be of the least use to her.



FEW people know what it means to be "down on the farm" until they have tried boarding at one.



DISCRETION is the better part of ardor.

THE WINE PRESS

By Theodore Lynch FitzSimons

I WATCH the figure of the dawn,
A ruddy shape,
Crushing the purple clouds, as one
Who treads the grape.

And, gushing from each mellow core,
The red sunshine
O'erfloweth heaven's starry floor
With precious wine.

The moon reels tipsy from her tower
In sorry plight,
And every bird and beast and flower
Is drunk with light.



FOODS THAT REMIND US

By L. A. Browne

MUSHROOMS.....of a polite Swede.
BACON.....of a Maine guide.
CHEESE.....of a talkative old maid.
WATERCRESS.....of an Irish girl.
POTATOES.....of a bookkeeper.
ONIONS.....of a forest fire.
PLANKED STEAK.....of a limousine.
RUM OMELETTE.....of a garage.
TAPIOCA PUDDING.....of a Unitarian clergyman.
GREEN PEAS.....of a schoolgirl.



SHE who is found out can always become the pioneer of a new morality.

THE RETREAT

By Robert W. Sneddon

AMONG my first friends in New York was a young man whom I shall call here Carrington Holt. He attracted me instantly, for he united the youth and buoyant energy of America with European attributes and appearance, a legacy of Dutch and English blood.

He was at once a profound thinker and a boy. His mind stretched into planes of thought which were the nethermost limbo to the average intelligence, yet its elasticity let it return to share the noisy wit of a dinner table in our paste-board Bohemia. Only his share in the banter took the form of sudden paradoxes, epigrams, and passionate invective against conventions. He hated prigs, puritans, preachers, propagandists and professional grass widows with cheerful impartiality, yet left St. Anthony far behind in his adherence to chastity.

When I first met him he was living in a bare, bright room in a boarding house. Its principal furnishing was a well filled bookcase, a battered cast of Thackeray, some prints and a plain oak table spotted with ink. The table was never free of sheets of paper covered with notes in his swift handwriting—stray thoughts, aphorisms—the uncut stones of that temple of philosophy of which he had chosen himself the architect. He kept himself alive by hackwork, executed in feverish haste so that he might return to his real passion.

How many days we starved there in company, with sudden and glorious eruptions into Epicureanism on the arrival of cheques! The joy of a real dinner chosen with care from a luxurious

menu, the head-to-head meditation over the wine list, care banished for a night—the talk, the plans, the visions, all were ours. We did not hesitate to say then that the illusions of youth can be bought with gold.

The hackwork ceased suddenly, and a long period of depression followed. We did not laugh quite so often. Carrington kept at his essays. He worked day and night, rewriting, polishing, refining the gold of his thought and beating it into wonderful vessels. But there was none to buy in the market. Here was a man of talent and originality, and yet he passed unnoticed among those who cried their wares with loud, insistent tongue.

He put the cause of his lack of success in one short phrase:

"I know the humanities but not humanity," he said sadly one day.

He confessed to me once that he had never loved any woman with any depth of passion, yet there was unbounded vitality in his movements, his speech, the swiftness of his brain.

I saw him being slowly crushed and could do nothing.

And then the unexpected happened. An aunt left him a legacy of twenty dollars a week, and the week after I saw him sail for Havre. He was going to seek out some little French village where he could live in comfort on his modest competency, and write the things which he wished to write.

I heard nothing from him for half a year. That was his way, and I understood, for our friendship was not a thing of words. I was content to wait till he chose to write.

Just as I was leaving New York on a

trip to Europe, I received a letter from him. I cannot do better than give it in full. It has something of his personality in its hasty lines.

MY DEAR DON:

I dare say you have been cursing me for a dilatory, forgetful rogue, and I don't blame you. I was so glad to get out of that maelstrom in which I was being buffeted and tossed about that this quiet haven into which I was cast has silenced my tongue. I wanted to forget and to rest, to think things over sanely. My fighting is over and I breathe freely. A small competency does not mean a small life: I've found that out, and as I sit at my desk here, I bless my old aunt for the feeling of security I have now. It is the staff which is going to help me to climb the mountain peak—and the skies are blue and tranquil about its rugged heights.

You will see from the address where I am—some ten miles from Dieppe—a little place in the hollow of the hills, and yet set upon the edge of towering white cliffs. The only way down to the water's edge is by a narrow gorge. The sea almost laps the base of the chalk heights, yet when it is out there is nearly a mile of sand, flat and glistening, between sea and cliff. There are only about fifty houses and a hotel, and I have rented the queerest little old shack of a place and transformed it into a real live author's den. About a mile off inland through winding lanes is an untidy French village—three slithery duck ponds, a *mairie*, a tiny casket of a church, several little wine shops, a grocery store with two loaves and three oranges in the window, straggling houses, stables and what not.

Once a day a shabby coach goes to and from Dieppe, and we get occasional visitors, mostly English or Parisians. The English are as a rule prim old ladies who squat about the beach on cushions and knit untiringly. The Parisians are men and women of all sorts with leggy children. You should see them bathe—both sexes in skin-tight suits, never able to swim much, but bobbing up and down near the edge with gurgles of laughter—does one good to hear it—or sprawling on the pebbles in towel peignoirs. Most of them rent villas, and it's a common sight to see them wandering home in their bathing things, cloaked, but quite fetching. In the afternoon, they go shrimping, with great floppy hats and bare legs, and paddle about the stakes put up by the fishermen for their nets. It's all very bright and gay, and I go and lie on the cliffs and watch them, little squirming ants below, for hours on end.

I wish to the Lord you could come across. I'm sure we could find room for you. You start at the—we. Behold, I am a man of family. But yes, I have married a French wife, who joins me in felicitations to you, my dear old Don.

Do make a spurt and come to Europe.

Yours aye,

CARRINGTON.

I read this letter as we were moving down the bay and smiled. Carrington married—and to a French girl. He would be the first person I would go to see. Yet, strange to say, the nearer I got to France, the more troubled I became. Some premonition of calamity haunted me. I could assign no logical reason for my apprehensions. Only I wondered: what effect would marriage have upon Carrington or our friendship?

One glance at Carrington's face as he rushed forward at Dieppe and nearly wrung my hand off, dispelled all my fears. He was brown, his eyes clear and honest as ever; he radiated happiness and affection and I owned to myself that I had been foolish. He talked furiously, and I had hard work to keep up with him. I scarcely noticed the interminable white road lined with poplars, dust-covered, the long climb out of the town, the stray soldiers cycling, the stout farm wives throned upon carts drawn by panting dogs. Carrington's tongue rattled on unsparingly as we proceeded—inquiries as to our mutual friends, as to myself and my work; and before we knew it we were driving into the village.

It was all that he had promised. Terraced cliffs descended on each side to the gorge, through which one caught a fugitive glimpse of the yellow sands. Blue sky and sea met with mingling of shades; a little steamer far out puffed its smoke into the still air; red-sailed fishing boats drifted with the tide. The air was alive with harmless buzzing insects and hung heavily between the hills. It was a real haven of rest and I sighed with content.

Carrington linked his arm in mine and we climbed up a long flight of steps cut in the rock, to a tiny house. A girl stood waiting at the door. As we approached, she came lazily down and putting her arms about Carrington's neck kissed him gently.

"Babet, my dearest friend, Don. You will make him welcome for my sake," he said with affection.

"M'sieu Don is very welcome," she repeated and held out her hand frankly.

As I kissed it I was astonished to find how rough the skin was. The open air, probably—the sea bathing had coarsened it.

"Now, m'sieu is tired and dusty," she said finally; "if he will ascend to his room, dinner will be served in ten minutes."

"I can promise you a dainty little meal, fit for a king," Carrington proclaimed. "Madame is a splendid housekeeper. Come along. You'll find a decent sized wash basin and towels in your room. I saw to that."

I shut the bedroom door and took off my coat and collar mechanically. Madame Holt was not quite what I had expected. No! Picture to yourself a tall, dark, robust girl, with a figure which showed promise of ample fullness, a pleasant face with signs of temper in the thick eyebrows and the square jawbones, good eyes and teeth, largish hands and feet. Had I seen her first in other circumstances I would have put her down as a servant girl of the best peasant class. Yet in her dress and her surroundings she was not out of place, her speech was refined, she carried herself as a person of breeding, and it was plain she loved her husband.

I finished my toilet petulantly. What did it matter to me, this marriage? Carrington was content.

They were seated when I came down, and the little sitting room presented a pleasant picture. The table with its coarse white cloth had a bowl of roses in the center, there was salad in another bowl, a jug of cider beside it, and the omelette was a triumph.

Carrington watched me tackle it and burst out laughing.

"There, Babet, did I not tell you that the good Don would adore your omelettes?"

"It is divine, madame," I acknowledged.

She smiled with a pleased shrug.

"I believe," Carrington asserted with a fond look at her, "that she is the last of the good housekeepers. This is better than old Twenty-ninth Street, isn't it? Lord, when I think how we pigged it there, and this!"

It was tranquil. The coolness of the shuttered room, the wooden floor on which the bars of filtered light played, the books, a desk in the corner, flowers, all had a homely, comforting appeal.

"You have been to Paris, of course, madame?" I asked in an interval of silence.

"Ah, no, m'sieu. I have never been further than Rouen. What a fine city that is; and the cafés so gay."

"Babet is a country bird," Carrington interjected. "She has lived all her life in the village."

I turned questioning eyes upon her.

"Yes, M'sieu Don, I am of the people," she said quietly, and rose to fetch the next course from the kitchen.

"Babet is plain *bourgeoise*, Don. Her father is Mayor of the village we passed through, but she is a girl of sense and, as you see, of breeding—a girl in a thousand, old man. It is curious how the common people among the nations of Europe have this natural air of courtesy, consideration—oh, what's the word?—refinement, I suppose."

"How long have you been married?" I asked.

"Three months."

"And you are happy? There's no need to ask that," I added hastily.

"Yes, absolutely. I have found what I was seeking—humanity. The nearer the soil one goes, the nearer one comes to the root of life. It is not found in the atmosphere of society or where seekers for fame or wealth are gathered."

"The new Rousseau, in fact," I exclaimed gaily. "What a story I shall unfold to listening ears in New York!"

He shook his head.

"No—I know them too well, old man. They would never see it as I do. You may laugh, but the first requisite for good work, for new thought, is harmony in one's surroundings. Envelop the soul—that's a damn foolish word, but it's what the herd understand—with an atmosphere of rest in the home, and you create. Babet has no opinions to clash with mine: I agree with her. She has her part to do, and I have mine. Together we form the perfect household, the union complete."

"And you never yearn for Broadway, studio carousals, highbrow teas—any of the old things?"

"Not one little bit. I'm done with them all. I've come out of the fight just in time. I'm perfectly happy with Babet's love. It wraps me around like a mother's care."

"But—" I began and stopped as Babet returned. I looked at her intently across the table. If ever there was a woman of strong passion it was Carrington Holt's wife. Not the passion which has brain and imagination behind it, but that which lies dormant in a strong, healthy body. God help Carrington, I thought to myself, if ever the awakening found him weak.

I lay awake that night for hours. Even the lullaby of the sea wash upon the pebbles did not calm me. I felt I was seeing the curtain rise upon a tragedy, yet in the morning when I came down to our coffee, rolls and honey, served in the tiny garden, luscious with honeysuckle, I laughed my fears to scorn. Babet hung about Carrington; her every glance forestalled his wish, her laughter was pleasant to the ear, and she was fresh, fair and pure in her neat linen dress.

I spent a delightful time with them. We bathed, we picnicked and lounged in company: he and I with our pipes, Babet with her lacework and a cinnamon stick. One day we spent in Dieppe and made a regular French holiday in the Casino. One night there was a fair in the village: a few booths where one might tempt fortune on the spin of a wheel and gain a cheap vase or a tin pocketknife. I remember we had a little shooting match with oily rifles that spat five shots apiece, and Carrington won. I turned out his target the other day; he gave me it as proof of his claim to being *bon tireur—tireur à merveille*—as he was hailed by the crowd.

There was a dance in progress in the barn—fifteen centimes admission, which included coffee and a cordial—where heavy-footed men and maids circled to the melancholy music of a decrepit caliope worked by an enormously stout man. The barn smelled of straw, earth,

lamp oil, coffee and cheap perfumes, but we enjoyed it thoroughly. I watched Babet. She at least was in her element.

Suddenly there was a murmur of exclamations and I turned my head. Three people had just entered. Two were men whom I cannot now describe, so little impression did they leave on my mind, but their companion, a woman, drew all eyes. Standing there, with a faint patronizing smile on her pale face, her petulant red lips curved in a tired bow, was a wonderful creature, slim and straight of carriage, holding her silken skirts well above the floor, tightly about her to show the perfection of her curving form. It was her eyes, though, which I noticed most of all: eyes that a man might sell his soul for, if only to win a glance. They were roving over the crowd with a plaintive seeking, seeming to say: "I am weary. Amuse me, good friend."

"What have we here, O Socrates?" I asked in a whisper. "What is she doing in this galley?"

"I saw her the other day shrimping on the beach—some Parisian divette. I'm sure I've seen her postcard somewhere. It's a face you can't forget."

"She's a maneater, whoever she is, Carrington. She lives on sensation and gobbles a new lover at every meal. Heaven knows what she hopes to find here."

She advanced into the barn as the caliope began to grind out a waltz, which, mangled as it was, had still enough of its sensuous charm to stir the rhythmic emotions, and stopped in front of Carrington. Babet regarded her placidly. I noticed her woman's eye sweep over the newcomer's toilette with childish admiration; she almost put forth her hand to test its texture.

Carrington moved uneasily on the hard bench under the gaze of those eyes, gave a low boyish laugh, a sarcastic side-glance at me, and stumbled to his feet, his eyes staring into that luring face. In one second I knew that, even as I, he had seen to the bottom of her soul and knew her as worthless, yet desirable. What whim had seized her to come there? Had she wearied of her escort,

of everything that made up her world? That I do not know, but she cast the cloak of her desire upon Carrington, and like one fascinated, he stood before her, wordless. She bent her head with a mocking upward glance, and whispered to him, and in a dream he put his arm about her waist, and they were dancing.

I felt a cold chill run up my back in spite of the overpowering warmth of the barn, and turned hastily to talk to Babet, but she had found a friend, a toothless old woman, and was conversing tranquilly with her. The other dancers had made way for Carrington and the stranger. Buxom girls in print gowns, awkward young rustics in ill fitting clothes, old young boys in jackets made for their fathers, their red, round faces bursting out of high collars, two or three wrinkled old men with cheeks like crab-apples that have lain upon a shelf in a dry garret, a soldier laced into his tight tunic, some village worthies in black suits with well polished boots—they had all drawn up against the reeking walls.

I watched the two who danced oblivious of those about them. Carrington was a good dancer and his partner floated in the current of air created by their motion. She clung to him closely, her face upon his shoulder, her glowing eyes draining the light from his. Within the little changing circle of their gliding feet she was weaving her spells; the faint perfume she breathed was wrapping him about in temptation; the glow which had come to her pale, powdered cheeks was a flame which had fired happy homes and crushed men in the ruins of their own honor; and this unhappy friend of mine was clasping her tight within his arms, the queen of a city, a city incarnate, Paris itself along whose pavements pleasure glides in half-veiled insolent beauty.

I started. Babet had left her old woman and was standing by me. I glanced up at her, half afraid, but as I saw her face with its unchanging good-humor and perfect trust, her simple interest in the dance so exotic in comparison with the rustic shuffling which is the nearest approach to the waltz attained by the clumsy-footed peasant, I

smiled. There was a trembling of her nostrils, however, which gave me cause for reflection. After all, I thought, no wife however trusting can view her husband in the arms of another woman, even in the conventionality of the dance, without a touch of jealousy, but I comforted myself with the idea that jealousy in small quantity is a necessary ingredient of domestic happiness.

Carrington was still circling when the music stopped suddenly, as the man at the calliope stepped down to have a drink. The dancers stood there in the center of the floor; Carrington staring at her and trembling, she smiling mysteriously. Suddenly he took his arm from about her, and with a half-insolent nod of her head, she laid her hand caressingly upon his arm, said something in a low voice, and left him. I turned to Babet, and when I looked round the next instant, the sorceress had left the barn.

Carrington moved over to us, flushed and thoughtful.

"Let's get out of this. Its abominably hot," he said hoarsely, and slipping Babet's arm into his, he hurried her out of the barn.

It was a wonderful night, and we talked lightly of its beauty, of the shadows of the lane, of the fair, but I could perceive in Carrington an under-current of thought on whose swift rushing flood his fragments of conversation swirled and eddied like straws.

When we got home, he kissed Babet, and she said good night to us both and went to bed.

"God, it is good to have a peaceful home and an honest wife," said Carrington, but there was a note of unnecessary assertion in his voice, a too evident intention to impress me with the sincerity of his contentment.

When I was in my bedroom I opened the window wide and looked out into the night. Someone was pacing up and down the garden, back and forward. It was Carrington.

We bathed together, all three, next morning, and one of the first persons I saw was Carrington's partner of the night before. She was with a merry party. I saw his lips tighten. She

contented herself with a nod and a semi-mocking shrug of her shoulders as he looked away. It was plain that she repented of her whim, and that her invitation to the dance had been one of the willful follies which had made her famous in Paris and Brussels, for I had learned her name from the keeper of the bathing cabins, and some part of her history. Carrington was very attentive to Babet all day, but silent and moody, as he had been sometimes in New York. I left him alone, for I had learned by experience that was the only way to treat him, and that he would soon recover.

I caught Babet watching him once or twice with an almost hungry look, but if she thought anything, she did not put it in words.

When she was not with us, she was busied about the house. In the first days of my stay, I could hear her singing in the bedrooms as she swept and dusted with a Frenchwoman's horror of dust, or played with shining pots and pans in the spotless kitchen, but within the last two or three days, she sang less and that plaintively. In the evenings as we talked she crocheted lace with strong fingers that never seemed to tire. She had no knowledge, such book knowledge as we foolish ones pride ourselves on, but a fund of common sense and a power of original observation handicapped by her inability to express it save in well worn phrases. As I listened to Carrington's enthusiastic exposition of fantastic themes, his rapid speech and excited gestures, I could not but see the contrast. Nothing but the most perfect love and understanding could bridge the gulf between.

One night we were having our usual after-dinner smoke, Carrington holding forth, and Babet with her crochet, when he broke out:

"Do lay down that eternal crochet, Babet, and listen."

"I am listening, my Carrington," she said raising wondering eyes, "but I do not understand."

He turned to me with an impatient movement.

"I say, Carrington," I ejaculated

hastily, "let's go to Rouen tomorrow morning for a couple of days."

"By Jove, that would be a good idea," he answered, diverted.

"You would like that, madame?" I asked.

"Yes, M'sieu Don. That would give me great pleasure. And I think Carrington needs a change," she added wistfully.

Whatever Carrington was about to say was forgotten in our discussion of plans, and we went to bed early so as to be up betimes.

He had recovered his good humor next morning, and was himself again, bantering a much harassed porter, and acting like a boy, with those whimsical turns of speech which had made him a favorite in New York. Babet, too, shared in his enthusiasm and we were a merry party. Rouen is anything but a gay town, but we managed to extract every drop of entertainment from its mediæval buildings and the cafés on the quays.

"Ah, this is something like it," laughed Carrington as we sipped our sirups and listened to an orchestra.

"I thought you'd like it, old man. You haven't quite lost your taste for city life."

"What makes you think that?" he asked shortly.

"Oh, you can't deceive me, you old impostor," I said merrily, but I saw that I had unconsciously touched upon a tender spot.

I noticed that Babet had been crying when she came down next morning, but I affected not to notice it, though it gave me a pang to imagine that anything had come between Carrington and his wife. Perhaps he had foolishly spoken to her about some trifling breach of table manners committed the evening before, something which would have passed unnoticed in their simple home, but which in a city restaurant was glaringly apparent. I must admit that Babet did not appear to advantage among the *bourgeois* fashionables of Rouen as at home. Her dress, her way of doing her hair, her childish wonder and delight, with a certain jealous

thriftiness, all marked her as a child of the soil, and I knew Carrington's sensitive appreciation of all that constitutes good breeding and form, of those false standards of society which he had willingly forsworn when he married.

At the end of the second day Carrington had relapsed into a sulky indifference, and he welcomed with eagerness my proposal to return home.

When we got back, I could not fail to see the change which had come over him. At first he seemed to resume his old life, but gradually he became impatient and restless. Babet was changing, too, but her constant care and the timid blushing tenderness she bestowed were lost on him. I wondered at first if the divette was in his mind, but I found that she was gone, and that he had apparently not seen her again. It was something deeper, but what I could not fathom. In our conversations I found a new tendency to revert to our old life and its excitements and he would surprise me by his curiosity about what was going on in the circles we used to frequent.

When I finally had to say good-bye, it was with real regret. I was conscious that I did not leave them as I found them.

"Back to the arena," I exclaimed with attempted gaiety as I shook both their hands. "I shall have to work like a nigger to pay for this holiday."

"Oh, wait here, wait here, man. You don't have to go back to New York," pleaded Carrington.

"I'd be afraid to wait in this lotus land, Carrington. I've got to be in the struggle."

"Nonsense!" he retorted. "Look at me!"

"But are you writing? I haven't seen you put pen to paper since I came."

"Oh, that will come—no use forcing things. If I have let things slide, I'll go back to work keener than ever. Good-bye, good-bye. Tell them all—"

"Yes," I interjected as he hesitated.

"Oh, that I haven't forgotten—quite. Swift return to us, old man."

"When are you coming across?" I asked as I climbed into the shaky coach.

He looked at Babet for a minute, then shook his head, and as the coach started its sluggish climb, I saw him shade his eyes with his hand. Beside him Babet was standing with straining eyes. They turned and walked away slowly—and apart.

I never saw Carrington Holt again. I wrote to him twice after I returned but without reply, and five months from the time I said good-bye to him, a newspaper clipping and a small volume of Turgeniev in French came to me by post from Dieppe.

Here is the translation of the clipping.

Berneval-sur-plage. The body of M. Carrington Holt, young American author, was discovered upon the beach yesterday by Jules Quintain, fisherman. His hand still held the Browning pistol with which he had shot himself in the left temple. The deceased leaves a widow, daughter of M. Duvet, Mayor of Berneval, to whom the sympathies of all are extended.

And in the book, two penciled notes, one in Carrington's hand.

"For Don**** West**, New York, Etats Unis. 'One cannot be born with the sound of battle in one's ears and think to escape the struggle by retreat.'"

The other, in a woman's straggling hand—"Souvenir de mon feu mari."

Nothing else. The volume strangely enough was—"The Torrents of Spring."



THE peril of association with a wicked woman is that she understands you.



SUCCESS—Hatred, multiplied by the number of one's friends.

WITHOUT INCONSTANCY

By Harry Kemp

“**W**HERE sailest thou, O friend of mine?”
“I sail where Love is all.”
“And dost thou deem to find such place upon this whirling ball?”
“I know not. I but trust in him—he takes the helm and steers.”
“Love is a thing of days, my friend, and Life’s a thing of years!
On many a ship of dreams I’ve sailed, to many an alien strand,
And I’ve grown gray with pilgrimage—yet know I not that land
Where Love holds sway beyond the day.”
“Nay, I would still be bold!”

And so my friend puts bravely out with mast of beaten gold,
With hull of hollow pearl and sail of silk stuffs woven fine,
Where the reef flashes colors ’mid a sea of troubled wine,
Where storms their darkened brows impend—for he must learn, as we
That Love indeed were less than Love without inconstancy.



SEA LONGING

By Sara Teasdale

A THOUSAND miles beyond this sun-steeped wall
Somewhere the waves creep cool along the sand,
The ebbing tide forsakes the listless land
With the old murmur, long and musical;
The windy waves mount up and curve and fall,
And round the rocks the foam blows up like snow—
Though I am inland far, I hear and know,
For I was born the sea’s eternal thrall.
I would that I were there, and over me
The cold insistence of the tide would roll,
Quenching this burning thing men call the soul;
Then with the ebbing I should drift and be
Less than the smallest shell that stars the shoal,
Less than the seagulls calling to the sea.

MIRRORS

By Robinson Jeffers

ABOUT Adair? It's a curious story—perhaps I can tell you more of it than anyone else. For it was to me that Adair came to unburden his soul, the night before he smashed all his mirrors and sailed for Africa.

Insane? Not at all. But he was excitable, you remember, and highly sensitive. Things irritated him—little things that you or I would barely notice. He had the vision of an artist, and the nerves of a decadent; but he had no art, no work—the artist's safety valve.

Adair used to visit me often in the evenings, and talk. He had strange theories, and a wonderful power of making them appear reasonable. There was a vividness in him . . . I can see him now—his very expression—the whiteness of his long features. He used to sit in the big wicker chair, there by the hearth, and prove to me, step by step, that evolution is a progressive degeneracy, that man is less happy, less beautiful, less perfect, than an ichthyosaurus. Then he would light another cigarette—he smoked them interminably. He used to come in without knocking, silently, like a ghost, any time between nine and midnight. Often he would talk until dawn, and go home under the rising sun. Or he would sit silent until dawn.

But his last visit was different from the others. About eleven in the evening I heard a step before the door, and a knock, and Adair's voice calling me.

"Come in," I said.

But he wouldn't come in; I had to go to the door. Adair was standing in the passage, violently excited.

"You have a mirror," he whispered,

'on the wall, to the right of the bookcase."

"Yes?" I asked, wondering.

"Take it down," he said. "Take it down—out of the room. Then I'll come in." And, as a matter of fact, the mirror had to be removed before he would enter.

Then, "Shut the door," Adair said; and began to pace the floor with great strides. Three steps from that window to the opposite wall; three steps from the wall to the window; back and forth, back and forth, without speaking. And in each three steps his heel would strike twice on the rug, softly, and once, with a sharp tap, on the hardwood floor. Thud, thud, tap; tap, thud, thud—a queer rhythm which got on my nerves.

Then Adair spoke, and so abruptly that I was startled.

"Have you ever hated mirrors?"

"No," I gasped. "No. What—"

"Neither have I," he said, "till tonight. It never occurred to me. But why not? Why not? They're contemptible. Everything's contemptible."

Then suddenly, with a plunge and jerk, Adair was in the middle of his story. He talked so rapidly that my mind was outdistanced at once, and tagged along out of breath, always half a dozen words behind his meaning.

"You remember Millie Gaspard," he said. And before I could quite recall the blonde little actress, Adair was already speaking of Miss Converse, whom people regarded as his fiancée. Then Adair's talk veered back to the actress.

"You know that two years ago I was intimate with Millie Gaspard."

I nodded. That intimacy had been the root of a scandal which even Adair's

inherited money was barely able to hush up.

"Millie had queer pet names to employ when she was feeling affectionate. She used to call me 'Baby of Love,' and 'Joy Child'"—Adair was speaking tragically, without a smile—"and she used to pat my hand, three little quick pats, holding it tightly in her own.

"My God!" he burst out incoherently. "I thought I was rid of her! I gave her ten thousand dollars, and thought I was rid of her

"But the memory sticks. We're like everybody we meet. Once I heard a coachman roar at his horse—filthy words. Ten months later I heard myself shouting the same words at my terrier.

"And tonight, Alice—Miss Converse—caught my hand and patted it three little quick pats. And said, 'Baby of Love.' That was tonight, when I was leaving her."

Adair paused for breath, and I interrupted him. "But," I said, "Miss Converse—how did she—"

"She learned it from me," Adair answered. "Just as I had learned it from Millie Gaspard, who had learned it from God knows what brute when she was young.

"Alice learned it from me. I remember now that once I patted her hand—and was hot with shame, remembering from whom I had the trick. And once—perhaps twice—I called her—by the pet name."

"But why," I said—"what do you—"

"Idiot!" Adair whispered. "Do you think I can marry a woman who has learned the tricks of Millie Gaspard?"

"Yet," he said, "that isn't the worst of it. The worst of it is that I know we are all mirrors—senseless mirrors—blank spaces which reflect. If I do a thing, or say a thing, it is only because someone else has done it, said it. Nothing but mirrors.

"And the sky and the earth and the water," Adair went on, "are mirrors. If I am happy, the sky is happy. If I am sorrowful, the world droops. Everywhere I look—my own face.

"And you, too," he said, raging at me with his dark eyes, "you are a mirror. You are bewildered because I am bewildered. You are exasperated because I am exasperated. If I should smile, you would smile. Bah!

"And," he whispered hopelessly, "God is a mirror. . . . My own face. My own face always. Or Millie's pet names."

With that, Adair tossed up one hand in a curiously final gesture and dropped into a chair—that wicker chair by the hearth.

But when I began to answer him—some foolish thoughts of remonstrance and consolation—Adair burst once more into speech, and raved like a mad prophet, tearing heaven and earth into shreds of similarity. "Everything is like everything else—everything reflects everything else—" So that it came to me to understand why Nero sought to destroy the world—because it looked like himself.

"There is nothing so terrible," I was thinking, "or so contemptible as one's own likeness. That is why monkeys seem unclean to us."

Then, through the cloud of my thought, I heard Adair bidding me good-bye.

"I shall sail tomorrow," he said, "for Europe, and get to Africa as quickly as possible. Perhaps in the desert, in the jungle, things won't look like myself. Good-bye."

So Adair went away the next afternoon, and has spent his life shooting big animals. Now and then he ships hunting trophies to his friends on this side. I hear that he has sent Miss Converse a rhinoceros head.



JOKE—Something a woman takes seriously.

A FLIGHT

By Edith Orr

SHE had often begged him to take her up in his monoplane and he had always refused; refused, too, not regretfully, as one should deny a pretty woman a favor, but brusquely and peremptorily, as if he enjoyed refusing. Although Mme. de Bray persisted, she saw very well that her persistence annoyed him.

Lieutenant Rosny was one of those little heroes of an hour that Paris produces, fondles and forgets. He had made some startling flights and he was handsome: the very type of slight, elegant young athlete who is adored of Parisian women.

To Lieutenant Rosny aviation was at once a profession and a passion. The emotions flight aroused in him startled his own soul; they were so new and as yet uncharted in literature or daily speech. Words themselves were the wrong tools for the task. He could not imagine what would have become of him if he had lived in the days before the aeroplane. Such a life would hardly have been life at all. He was a competent soldier, but the military routine was to him only the dull, gray background for the gorgeous adventure of conquering the air. His life, he felt, was dedicated to that; if he would have been puzzled to define the exact usefulness of such a career, nevertheless he felt it useful, almost sacred. That a frivolous woman, who was nothing to him, should beg to participate in this supreme passion, as she might ask to be taken sailing, or motoring, outraged all his feelings.

Mme. de Bray, to Lieutenant Rosny, was merely the kind of woman he was always meeting in his sister's *salon* at the "five o'clock." She was slight, fragile,

elegant, dressed with a most passionate regard for the subtleness of fashion; she had a pale, exquisite skin and large, mournful eyes; she bore about with her always an atmosphere of discreet melancholy, and her conversation was one continuous stream of ecstatic superlatives. She loved "*le sport*," she adored the theater, she was impassioned by the races, and the aeroplane left her almost exhausted and wordless. She was mad about it.

Lieutenant Rosny could not feel that there was anything very real in Mme. de Bray.

When she attacked him for the sixth time he had only one argument with which to oppose her—that of danger.

"We do not take women with us into the air," said Rosny. "Not yet."

"You may not," she returned glibly; "other men do. Sara, of the Variétés, has flown with four different men. The Comtesse de Présle always goes with her husband on his practice flights. Thérèse de Maigny flew yesterday afternoon with Callot."

"That is very stupid of Callot," declared Rosny, frowning. "His type of machine is only an experiment, and Callot does not know how to fly—he has already fallen three times. I cannot imagine why he allows Mme. de Maigny to risk her life."

"He loves her," breathed Madeleine.

"A very stupid reason for letting her throw away her life. You understand they may both be dashed to pieces one of these days."

"Together!" whispered Madeleine in a reproachful breath, and then added quietly on another note: "Is it, then, so very dangerous?"

"The danger cannot be exaggerated—scarcely conceived."

"And are you never afraid?"

"I am always afraid," he declared, with the stern fervor of a prophet. "Always. The week I made my first flight my best friend was killed by the explosion of his petrol tank. The next week my cousin lost control of his biplane in a gale. Only yesterday, as you know, Barras was crushed beneath his on a calm day. No one knows why. I never go up but these pictures pass before my eyes. If I were a religious man I should pray."

Mme. de Bray contemplated him for a moment. It is difficult for some women to make a hero of a man who admits he is afraid. For a moment Mme. de Bray saw her young hero dethroned. Then by a mighty effort of the imagination she reinstated him.

"It is very brave of you, all the same, to go up in spite of your fears; much braver than if you were too ignorant to feel any. I—I am a woman. I am ignorant. I do not think I should feel afraid at all—with you."

"I will not take you," declared Lieutenant Rosny.

"Never?"

"Not until I have perfected a machine that I believe to be absolutely safe—that is, as safe as a motor boat or an automobile."

"And then I may go?"

"If you still wish it." His eyes accused her indifferently of all manner of unfaithfulness: in sport, in taste, in personal predilections and even in whims.

It was in May that Lieutenant Rosny gave this promise, which he immediately forgot.

In September Mme. de Bray and Lieutenant Rosny were at the aviation meeting at Rheims.

Mme. de Bray, in a ravishing *costume tailleur* of satin from Cheruit and a distracting hat from a modiste whom she herself had introduced to sudden fame, sat in a tribune box a little lower and to the left of that one sacred to the President of the French Republic. Two

of her dearest friends of that season, in fashions as discreetly elegant, sat with her; about them hovered several young admirers and a husband or two. One of the husbands was Mme. de Bray's. He was large and fat, and sat well to the front of the box, where he could watch the less distinguished crowd that circulated in the *enceinte* below, leaning over the railings that bounded the vast flying field, chatting in excited groups and wandering back and forth between the tribunes and the hangars.

M. de Bray was most particularly interested in those ladies whose costumes were more striking and whose cheeks and lips were more brilliant than those of his wife. He sat absorbed, the end of his stick in his mouth.

Mme. de Bray had eyes only for Lieutenant Rosny.

Lieutenant Rosny was in the air. His huge monoplane, heralded by that strange, unmistakable sound, halfway between a squeak and a roar, bore down from the farther end of the field, flashed before her humming mightily, rounded the curve by the hangars, passed again, already far away, on the opposite side of the ellipse, almost vanished and turned once more, flying strong and true as a gull, and with a steadiness and purpose that never were in the flight of any bird. Lieutenant Rosny had been in the air for hours, and the record for continuous flight had already been broken thirty minutes since.

"It gets tiresome," pouted one of Mme. de Bray's guests. "I wish he would stop! It bores me to look, and yet I cannot help looking! I am hypnotized."

Mme. de Bray tapped her foot and smiled. She did not take her eyes from the monoplane.

M. de Bray removed his stick from his mouth.

"Here is something new!" he said to the pouting one. "Blériot is going to mount."

The pouting lady leaned forward. At the same moment a murmur ran through the tribunes, a murmur of alarm that throbbed almost into a cry of fright.

"What is the matter? What is the matter?" she cried, turning quickly in her seat.

M. de Bray, who sat beside her, shrugged his shoulders.

"They say he has fallen."

"Fallen! Who—Blériot?"

"No; Rosny."

"It is a *blague*," pronounced M. de Bray calmly.

Mme. de Bray had jumped to her feet. She was holding both hands tight clenched to her mouth.

"It is true! It is true!" she gasped. "He is down!"

It was true. Rosny was no longer flying. The buzz of his mighty engine had ceased. Far down the field a crowd was already gathering. The loiterers in front of the tribunes turned and ran to join it. The men in De Bray's box followed them, and the women were left alone. Mme. de Bray put her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

"My dear Madeleine!" remonstrated Mme. Laval, in a mixture of sympathy, curiosity and contempt. "Be a little careful. Everyone notices your emotion!"

"Emotion quite useless," went on the liquid syllables of the other woman, with the fluency and patness that make French conversation so like a scene in the theater. "Quite useless and wasted, for here comes M. Rosny himself on your husband's arm!"

Madeleine dabbed her eyes quickly with her scented handkerchief, produced a powder puff and a rouge pencil and was herself again.

"I cannot help it," she declared. "I am always like that—always emotioned. An accident of any kind quite unnerves me. We ran over a dog last year—just a miserable little cur—and I dreamed about it for months!"

Madeleine's friends smiled discreetly.

Lieutenant Rosny approached the box, surrounded by a crowd of worshippers. "He has flown five hours and a half! He has broken every record! He is extraordinary, that boy! He is marvelous!" came over and over from enthusiastic French lips. All who could get near enough and felt fit for the honor

seized a hand, right or left, and shook it feverishly. His more intimate friends from the De Bray box clapped him with open palm upon the shoulder.

"Thank you, my friends, thank you!" cried Rosny, laughing, well pleased enough to make his escape into the harbor of the box.

Here he was met by a tumult of new enthusiasm. The ladies, as he kissed their hands politely all round, told him of their feelings. How ecstatic they had felt as they saw him gliding by! How they had felt as if they were flying themselves! How they hoped he would never stop!

"And here is Madeleine," cried Mme. Laval innocently—"who nearly swooned because she thought you had fallen and killed yourself!"

M. de Bray's eyes turned quickly upon his wife. "Oh, yes!" she supplemented readily, and then to her husband: "Feel my hand, my friend, how it still trembles."

M. de Bray's momentary suspicion was at once allayed. "She is always like that—Madeleine," he said proudly—"always emotioned in the face of danger."

"There was no danger," said Rosny coldly, a little piqued. "No danger whatever. This is the calmest part of the day, and my machine is in perfect condition. I felt that my petrol was about to be exhausted, so I alighted."

"Rosny says that," declared one of the men, laughing, "to advertise his machine. He is forming a *société anonyme* to put his monoplanes on the market, and he wishes us to think they are absolutely safe."

"But I assure you," cried Rosny, a little heated, "they *are* absolutely safe, to a man who understands them; at least as safe as an automobile or a motor boat!"

Madeleine's eyes sparkled. "Absolutely safe!" she repeated unctuously. "Absolutely safe! As safe as an automobile or a motor boat. Now then, Lieutenant Rosny, it is the moment for me to claim your promise!"

Rosny frowned. Madeleine was too dramatic for his taste. He prided him-

self on being almost an Englishman for stolidity.

"What promise?" he asked.

"You remember! You remember very well!"

Rosny did remember. He knew himself caught. He felt he had been very stupid.

"M. de Bray might object," he uttered weakly.

"Object!" cried De Bray, pricking up his ears. "Object to what?" M. de Bray was ready on the spur of the moment to object to anything.

"No, my friend, you shall not object!" cried Madeleine, in an immediate passion of volubility. "You have heard what M. Rosny said. He promised me one time—long ago—that when his monoplane was as safe as an automobile or a motor boat he would take me up into the air. Now he admits it is quite safe, not a particle of danger; so I claim his promise and I am going up—immediately."

"My machine must be overhauled first," temporized Rosny.

"Overhaul it then," she commanded, with the superb coolness of one who feels herself mistress of the situation.

"Madeleine, I entreat you!" cried M. de Bray, real concern and alarm on his fat countenance.

Madeleine pursed her lips.

"Not in this public place!" he begged.

She stamped her foot. "I *want* to go up in a public place! I want you all to see me and envy me."

The two men looked at each other helplessly. Rosny shrugged his shoulders. De Bray shook his head and sighed.

"Very well, Madeleine," said her husband.

Madeleine pulled the cap down over her ears and buttoned the leather jacket they gave her. She glanced at Rosny beside her. He had been a ridiculously long time, she thought, fussing about the lever and the motor and the wings. Now he sat ready, frowning and biting his mustache.

"I thought they strapped us in."

"No. Not any longer."

"Why?"

"It is better not."

She understood him. He meant that in case of a fall the passenger must be allowed one little chance of not being ground beneath the machine. Madeleine smiled.

"*Allez!*" he called suddenly to his assistants who stood ready.

The men began to push. The machine went slowly, then fast over the uneven ground, jolting and grumbling and swaying from side to side. Madeleine breathed very hard. Now that the moment had come, she felt unexpectedly a little shaken out of her serenity. She was committed now to her fate. Perhaps it was malign fate; perhaps they were embarked on an adventure more perilous than she had imagined.

Rosny lifted his hand and leaned over the wheel. There came a change in the motion of their chariot. The machine no longer jolted over the uneven turf. The front wheels left the ground and then the back ones wrenched themselves free. They were flying into the air at last, mounting, mounting, mounting! The earth dropped away beneath them; the little creatures running down the field became as nothing; their shouts were lost. It amused Madeleine at first to see the fields, the trees, the houses fall from one plane to another and then become a mere blur and a shadow. Her heart sank a little, for she had not supposed they would go so high. Then it rose again, throbbing madly, and seemed as if it could never stop beating out its tumultuous ecstasy. They were so far away, they two, so far away from all other human beings . . .

She turned to look at Rosny. He had stopped frowning and biting his mustache. They were no longer mounting, but pursuing a level course through the air. He smiled, looking at home and at peace. Her heart stopped its violent beating, and she, too, felt a delicious calm and tranquillity stealing through all her veins.

"I told you I should love it!" she cried.

He looked at her indulgently. The wind, in their swoop upward, had caught her hair and brought some little untidy

curls about her face. Her cheeks were flushed. She looked younger, less artificial, more alive.

"You are really not afraid?"

"Not a bit—with you." She looked him full and frankly in the eyes.

His heart warmed toward her courage and confidence. Decidedly she was a woman of unusual character. Capricious and fanciful indeed, but steadfast and determined in her fancies. He was sorry that his duties as pilot took his eyes so soon away from her.

"Tell me what you see now!" he asked, smiling at her.

She gave a quick glance downward, was glad to turn her eyes upon the pilot once more.

"Nothing—nothing but a blur. Or perhaps my eyes—"

"It makes you dizzy looking down?"

"A little."

"We can descend now if you like. You know now what it is to fly. You can tell all your friends you have flown. You are the captain; you have only to say the word. Have you had enough?"

Madeleine smiled and did not immediately answer. She was reveling in her own emotions, emotions she had not even seen in visions when she, leading that little crawling life down below, had first had the notion of flying upward out of it. It was as if her soul, too, had put forth wings, and could career as freely through a new ether as their ship now soared through the upper air. The strangest little circumstances came like bubbles to the surface of her mind: how yesterday she had been ashamed at being caught by one of her friends in a last year's frock; how she had spoken fretfully to her husband because he *would* drum with his fingers; how that very morning she had taken tea à l'*anglais* for breakfast instead of the chocolate she loved that she might not begin to grow fat. What a world where one could bend one's glorious consciousness to such follies! What a world, what a world where they were not!

"Shall we go down?" He was still awaiting her answer.

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" cried Madeleine

quickly. "Not yet! I thought our flight had only begun!"

"Are you happy?"

"I have not words to describe it."

"Ah, you get it, too." He was thrilled, really thrilled. He had usually enjoyed these ecstasies of flight alone; a companion in his experience had always reduced the poetry of flight to the prose of time and wind and motors; that a feminine companion might not have the same depressing effect had somehow never occurred to him.

"One feels," he said awkwardly, "as if there were no bounds, no limits to what we might do; as if we might rise up to Mars or the moon. It's the freedom, the freedom that makes us so happy."

"Ah, the freedom!" she cried. "Just freedom—all by itself—that is nothing. We must be free for *something*—something great, something enthralling!"

Rosny knew himself on a dizzier height than he had ever reached before. Perhaps no man had ever reached it. This woman, who only an hour ago had been no more to him than a charming annoyance, was suddenly the only woman in the world; she gave him dreams, she intoxicated him. There would be no more flying to Mars unless she was with him; no freedom save with her . . .

"It is you!" he cried, as if he spoke in answer to a riddle. "You give me freedom!"

Madeleine smiled a little. "I give you freedom? I cannot give you what was never mine. No; it is here, it is around us; we fly upward to be bathed in it, this splendid freedom."

"I never found it before—not like this. It is you who show the way."

She had not ceased being a coquette nor a woman of the world simply because she had submitted to the intoxication of the air. Reveling in that intoxication, her mind moved clearly through it. She knew what Rosny meant better, far better than Rosny himself; and prolonged the explanation because such dalliance with emotion was sweet.

"How have I shown you the way? Tell me—"

"Madeleine," he pronounced solemnly, "I love you."

"Since when?"

"Do not ask me that."

"For how long?"

"That is easier. Forever."

The ship soared triumphantly on and seemed to her to be mounting toward the stars.

"You do not ask me," she murmured, "anything of myself. If I—"

"Not yet."

"Let it always be; not yet. Let us never go back to earth. Let us fly on and on, with the glorious permission of the air, to think and dream and love as we please. Shall we?"

She waited in ecstasy for the confirming words, but they did not come. Instead, he crouched low over his wheel, his brow puckered and tense.

"Look down," he commanded. "Tell me what you see!"

"I see the earth," she answered. "It looks like a great saucer, the edges tipped up toward us. There is a long black crack in it—that is a river. There is a hedge—a house. We are going down! You are taking me down. It is all over, the freedom. One moment of it was enough for you. In a few minutes we shall be out of the stars, ourselves, safe on that odious earth."

"I hope so."

"Then I hope so, too. . . . My God! How I despise you!"

"Madeleine!" he entreated, and there was agony in his voice. "I am not taking you down. We are falling. Be brave! I have lost control of my machine."

"And you do love me?"

"I do love you. It is because I love you, Madeleine—listen, listen! I am trying to get you down safely. I am trying with all my soul and all my strength. I was a cur to bring you."

They were swooping downward in a long volplane. The head of the great bird sank lower and lower below its wings.

"You are afraid we shall be killed?"

He bent his head.

"Death!" cried Madeleine. "You think I am afraid of death? *That's* our freedom—it's the beginning of our free-

dom. I am so glad it ends like this; and now I will tell you the truth. I love you—I love you—I love you! I have always loved you. It is happiness beyond anything I could have dreamed, to die with you like this!"

"You shall not die," he repeated grimly. "You shall not die."

And then in a moment he knew that she must die. He could no longer keep the plane even in partial control. It fell away from him, though his hands never left the wheel. The black earth flew up eager to destroy them; and all that Rosny knew was that Madeleine's arms were at last about him and that they were falling together.

"Stand back! Stand back!" someone was crying. "Give her air! She must have air!"

There was a strange, aromatic smell in Madeleine's nostrils. Something hot burned in her throat. Her eyelids fluttered and opened.

Her head was on her husband's knee. His fat face quivered and tears were running down his cheeks.

"My poor darling!" he cried. "I thought I had lost you. You have been unconscious for half an hour."

"Am I alive?" she murmured while her husband held her hands and kissed them frantically. She would not let his go, but clung to them childishly. It was as if they had been separated for months; she was so glad to see his face again. Even his tears did not seem to her absurd.

"Alive and unhurt," he answered her, sobbing, "except your arm, which is black and blue. This one—it was clasped about our poor Rosny's neck. You were trying to save yourself— If you had not—"

Madeleine shivered, and with her husband's arm about her sat up. "Rosny!" she murmured. "Rosny!" And then a shudder went through her—a shudder of fear, dim, half-realized.

"Was he killed?" she asked.

"Reassure yourself, my darling. A twisted ankle and a few scratches."

A half-familiar form limped toward her. She saw a capless head and a

torn jacket, while a hand bound in strips of linen held toward her a cup of tea.

"Drink it, I beg of you, madame," said Rosny in the voice of society. "It will refresh you."

He looked so funny that Madeleine could hardly keep from laughing in his face. She wondered she had never noticed before how stiff and ridiculous his manners were. She did not know

that her lips were bleeding, and her hair fallen and caked with mud; but Rosny did.

"Thank you, my friend," said Madeleine carelessly, as she took the teacup in a muddy hand. "How funny it is falling in an aeroplane—quite as bad as fainting or taking ether. You were quite right to warn me off. If I had known what it would be like I should never, never have gone up!"



THE CRICKETS

By Henry Eastman Lower

OH, cheery minstrels of the summer night,
Whose jocund chirrup charms the fragrant breeze,
Tell me what music-loving spirit frees
Such hopeful ecstasies from such a mite!
Through forest corridors, dim in the sight
Of the pale moon, at dusk by quiet seas,
O'er clover-laden meadows where the bees
Sip in the sun, I hear—and dream delight.

Calm Beauty, put your hand on my tired eyes,
And let me dream forever and a day;
Perpetuate the golden memories
That haunt the footsteps of a weary way.
Youth seemed eternal and love's path was long
When life and I thrilled to the cricket's song.



SAINT—What she thinks he is before marriage.
MARTYR—What he thinks he is after marriage.



THE moral tragedy of the world is the fact that vice, too, is its own reward.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LÉANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

CYNICISM is a disease, caused by sour grapes. If it attacks you in youth, a few warm applications of affection and true love, undiluted, will speedily cure. In later years it is incurable.

No one can lie as well as a woman—for she will persuade even herself that she is speaking the truth.

Every woman carries hidden away within her a wild, weird elfin self—that leaps forth in the hour of crisis and does the startling deed . . . then vanishes, leaving its everyday semblance to pay the price in plodding, patient, hopeless drudgery.

After you have gone to the limits of suffering and sinning, you find that it is not your moral conviction that makes you pure or worthless—but, quite independent of it, the inborn instinct of your flesh.

Sordid and commonplace as our love memories may be, we place a halo above them to glorify ourselves.

While we love, we are as the enchanted princess—sleeping. The awakening will be rude. For, instead of a charming prince, it is the churl Reality who rouses us from our dreams.

Home—the place where is faithfully kept green the memory of your every misdeed and mistake.



SERENADE

By J. W. Wood

COOL the breezes come, stirring vagrant perfume,
Shaking subtle sweetness from every nodding flower,
Mellow moonlit sky, aflood with dripping silver,
Filtered through the low-hung boughs of many a leafy bower
Made for happy loves. Stars in golden garments
Hang their scattered fairy lights across the dark above.
Hark—the muffled roll of the far-off ocean
Beats an obbligato to my aria of love.

A HAND IN THE GAME

By Robert Beale Davis

I AM afraid of him!

With the coming of daylight, we smile at the fevered imaginings which seem so real in the darkness. But now, as I sit here writing, with the sun shining outside, last night's happenings at the Café Briguet are no less vividly real. The fear that made the hours from midnight to dawn a sleepless, black eternity was no night horror. I can still see Vorslav's face and his sure, terrifying smile.

You wonder why I stay in Paris—why I don't run away? It is because the fascination of the game holds me here. We are gambling—Vorslav and I—and I am the stake for which we are playing.

That is why I am writing—word for word—the happenings at the Café Briguet. Before time can dim any of its realness, I am going to write it down. It saved me once. Who knows—the memory may save me again!

Until last night, I thought one chapter of my life was closed; it had apparently ended when I told Kent good-bye and sailed for Cherbourg. That was five years ago, but it is hard to believe that the woman I am today ever could have been the girl who lived that almost forgotten American existence.

How I returned to Aunt Edith in New York after my years in the convent had made me more a French than an American girl—how I overcame almost insurmountable obstructions and found myself on the stage, playing the part of a débutante, instead of remaining on the other side of the footlights and being one—how all this came about is not worth writing down.

Of all that part of my life, there are just two things which have always re-

mained vividly distinct in my mind. One of them is the recollection of Kent's hands. I suppose there is some one thing which everyone unconsciously notices when meeting a person for the first time. With some it is the eyes, with others the quality of the voice. With me it is hands; and Kent Orton's were absolutely distinctive. White and slender as a woman's, yet every curve and line bespoke strength, making them singularly masculine. But even as closely as I always notice, it was not until I had known him for some time that I noticed that the little finger of his left hand was cut off at the third joint.

The other thing that I shall always remember is my parting with this same man—Kent Orton. The night before I was to sail I told him, finally, that I could never marry him; and this leave-taking, amid all the bustle that invariably accompanies the sailing of a great liner, was the end of everything between us.

Other men have come into my life since then—gone out and been forgotten; but the recollection of that morning is unforgettable. It was a nasty day, damp and misty. I can even remember how the tiny drops of condensed fog sparkled in his unruly, blond hair, as he stood bareheaded beside me.

"Good-bye," he said, and in his eyes there was the same puzzled, hurt expression that had come into them the night before when I told him that I could never care for him as he wished and deserved. "If you ever need me—"

I shook my head imperatively. You see, in my own way I cared a great deal for Kent; and not for worlds would I have let him see the tears that I was

fighting to keep out of my eyes. If he had, nothing could have kept him from following me on the next boat. Now I almost wish he had seen.

The hoarse whistle bellowed warningly. "Good-bye," he said again gravely. "If you ever need me—no matter where I am, no matter where you are—I will come."

Without a word I turned and left him standing bareheaded in the mist. That ended it. The first chapter was closed; and when the next one was written, Kent Orton would have no part in it.

In Paris, for a while, I thought of him. There, when a different life and men of a different kind gave me a truer perspective, I realized that I had thrown away, without once realizing its value or its rarity, a thing many women would give up life itself rather than lose. I had given up the absolute love of a good man.

Then—if this recital is to be a truthful one, I must confess it—I forgot him altogether. Here I was one of hundreds who were fighting for recognition on the stage. Aunt Edith and her American social prominence went for nothing. It is a fight, too, for the woman who determines to win—unaided. But to me the reward was worth the price. I am French in everything but birth, and a Paris success has been my ambition ever since I have been old enough to really want anything.

It was some time during these days of my struggle for recognition that I learned of Kent's death; and until then I had not realized how utterly a part of my new life I had become. Aunt Edith and all of the life I had lived before coming to Paris seemed another existence. But it did hurt when I read in the letter that his last words had been a message to me: "Tell her that there has never been anyone else."

Then came my first real chance—and Vorslav. Owing to some tangle about producer's rights, his "La Rêve" had been played in almost every European capital before Paris saw it. I had seen it in Vienna and again in London, and when I learned that I had been chosen to play Nichette, I hardly know which was greater, my surprise or my delight.

It is a small part, but there is a big opportunity in it for the woman daring enough to grasp it.

Naturally, I supposed Vorslav would be at rehearsals, and like any other woman, I could not anticipate meeting the most talked-of man in Paris without a little thrill of excitement. Our manager told us on the first day the company assembled that Vorslav's whereabouts were unknown, but that we might expect him on almost any day. All of this in a tone, and with a wise smile, that might mean anything. In common with everyone else, I suppose, I at once thought of his place in the country—the location of which not even his chauffeur knows, but which plays such a prominent part in the rumors which everyone has heard.

Then one day, about a week later, he came. In many ways, he proved to be just the sort of man his plays and the things I had heard of him had led me to expect. Brilliant, virile and with an attitude toward life which is an odd admixture of modern Europe and the Orient, he has just enough of the commonplace mixed with the bizarre to lend color to any of the stories one hears—stories which all Paris has listened to from the time his first success made a notable out of a nobody overnight. Whether any of them are true, nobody knows—or cares.

Vorslav was markedly courteous to all of the company—at first. Then more than one of us fell under his displeasure. After he saw that I was playing Nichette just as that snub-nosed, English girl played it in the butchered London expurgation, he treated me like a piece of scenery. Just once he spoke to me about it. "You're the best counterfeit I have ever seen," he sneered contemptuously. "When I first looked at you, I thought you had brains." That was all, but in that minute I determined to force his approval. The part as I was going to play it on the first night—and not before—would startle Paris, I knew. Now I determined to key it to a higher pitch—higher, in fact, than I had before dared. Then let Vorslav sneer!

I did it. The rest of the company raged and the critics applauded; but I

was not satisfied. A little earlier and the unqualified praise of my work which I read in the reviews on the morning after our première would have meant unalloyed satisfaction. Now I required more. Vorslav must admit that I was more than a piece of scenery.

The next night he met me at my dressing room door and asked me to go to supper with him. I refused. The next night he asked. Again I refused. The third night I went. Then, almost every night we were together after the theater, until our world noticed and began to whisper.

About a month ago, as I was leaving my dressing room, Mordine, the woman who sings off stage in the second act, knocked at my door. Any impatience in being delayed in keeping a supper engagement with Vorslav disappeared when I recognized my visitor. From the first time I ever saw her, she has interested me. No woman as young as she has a right to look out at the world through eyes as old as time. And there is something about her that tells another woman that she has lived her life and found it a rotten sham—and that now she is too indifferent even to make an end of it.

"Child," she said, "do you know what you are doing? Haven't you lived in Paris long enough to know Vorslav? Most men's love is like powder. A flash—a flare"—she shrugged—"then it is over. Possibly your wings are a little singed, but that is all. Vorslav's love is different. It destroys utterly."

"You're like all the rest of the women, gabbling of something you know nothing about," I retorted sharply. Five years in Paris has taught me to look for another motive when a woman comes to me in disinterested friendliness. "Besides, Vorslav is not in love with me. He is the one man I have seen in Paris who realizes that such a thing as friendship can exist between a man and a woman."

"Vorslav a friend of a woman!" Mordine laughed softly—the sound a travesty of mirth.

"But if he is in love with me, why should you care?"

"Care! I don't—about that or any-

thing else. But, after all, I am a woman, and so are you."

"Wait a moment—please!" I begged as she turned to the door. "I'm sorry for what I said. But you know that here one woman comes to doubt friendliness in another. Tell me—what do you know of Vorslav?"

"Did you ever hear of Louise Ardoux?"

I nodded.

"I knew her. The story that most people have heard is up to the time she disappeared. I could tell you the rest—what happened afterward. Remember one thing: Vorslav's '*Château Perdu*' is not a fairy tale." Before I could ask her to explain, she was gone.

When I told Mordine that between Vorslav and myself there was nothing more than friendship, I was speaking the truth. Though the weeks of our acquaintance had drifted into months, he was still no more than the friend he had been from the night he saw that I could act. His admiration was all for my ability as an actress, and if he considered me possessed of either charm or beauty, he had never shown it. And the fact that I noticed it proved that I was still more woman than actress. I wanted him, like other men, to realize that I was a woman, and beautiful. Now I would give almost anything if he never had.

Yesterday—or was it years ago when I was a girl, with nothing more to worry over than next week's engagements?—yesterday Vorslav came here to my apartment, and brought with him a manuscript. "After luncheon we'll read this," he said, and there was something in his voice which thrilled me with a delicious sense of expectation.

Luncheon seemed to drag through interminable hours. At last it was over, and together we came in here—into this very room where I am writing. He closed the door and placed the manuscript in my hands. "Read it," he said. "It is my great play. I shall never write another as good. When you have finished, if you say you are capable, you shall create the part. Yes," he continued convincingly, noticing my surprise, "with that play, I can dictate my

own terms. If I said that it should not be produced unless a scrubwoman played Margot, even then any manager in Paris would take it. Read it! Then you will understand." He turned quietly to a seat by the window, and sat indifferently watching the vehicles which passed in the street below.

In a moment I was deep in the play. The air of the room became thick and heavy with smoke from the innumerable cigarettes he lighted, one after the other. My own I forgot until it burned down to my finger. I threw it away, disgusted, I remember, that I had held it so as to leave a stain of nicotine. I loathe women with stained hands. But neither the stifling air of the smoke-filled room nor the stain on my fingers could hold my attention for more than a second. Vorslav was right. It was a great play.

When I had finished, he turned to me. "Well?" he inquired.

Then—why I don't know; in part it was excitement, in part disappointment—I burst into hysterical tears. "No, I can't play it," I cried. "You knew I couldn't! I can't play Margot; and no other woman can unless she has walked through hell in her bare feet." There were no tears now. I was all excitement. "Why—in parts—just before Jean leaves her—I don't even understand what she is saying. Her speeches are just a jumbled conglomeration of words."

Right then I should have realized that everything people say about Vorslav is true—and at that, only half the truth known. No man could have written that part unless he had seen Margot with actual, physical eyes. It was not imagination; it was the photographic reproduction of a real woman. Then the truth flashed on me with a convincingness that was indubitable. Mordine had once been Louise Ardoux, and the play I had just read was the last half of the story of the woman who disappeared. Impulsively, I said: "Vorslav, you are a genius. That play proves it. But it proves something else. You've got the cleverness of the devil; but along with it, you've got the soul of a brute."

The speech was too intense and melodramatic to cause him to do more than

smile; and when he did, I wondered how a man with such a smile as his could have written that play.

To hide my confusion at my outburst, I stopped and gathered up the scattered sheets from the floor where I had thrown them. "You will have to find another Margot. I'm not capable, and I know it." To myself I added: "And may God have pity on any woman who is!" I held out the manuscript, and as he took it, I seemed to be giving him my one chance for fame. "If I could only play that part!" I said, more to myself than to him. "But I can't—and I'm glad."

Vorslav looked at me sharply. "Will the woman always rule the artist?" he said. A moment later I was alone.

Last night I did not have to go to the theater, and Vorslav insisted that we should celebrate my holiday by going out to dinner together. He promised to take me to a new place—a place where, knowing Paris as well as I do, I had never been. I went, and we dined at the Café Briguet. I will not tell you where it is. Some day you may stumble upon it; and if you do, always afterward you will lead your friends there with the happy air of a discoverer. In two respects the Café Briguet is unique. One is that there, and only there, you can taste a wonderful meat sauce. The other is that the Café Briguet closes at twelve o'clock. Neither the displeasure of visiting princes nor the power of American dollars can change this invariable rule. At twelve, old Monsieur Briguet hobbles to the front door and closes it—and when he does so, every guest must be on the outside.

Beyond this, there is nothing to differentiate this café from numerous others dotted about the city. From the street you enter a long, low-pitched room, overcrowded with tables. At the back, a stairway leads up to what I learned to be the only private dining room in the house. The pleased smile with which Henri, the *maitre d'hôtel*, greeted us was proof that Vorslav was both a welcome and a generous guest. "Monsieur's room is prepared, and everything is as he directed," he said; and, turning, led the way to the stairs. As I followed, it was

impossible not to overhear some of the remarks of the different diners. "Who is it with Vorslav this time?" a girl, evidently a model, asked over her glass. "Don't you know her?" the man opposite replied. "It's 'La Femme de Neige.'" Once, soon after I came to Paris, a critic called me that, trying to be witty at my expense, and the name stuck.

Ordinarily, I should have been more than a little interested in the comments—possibly a bit flattered at the excitement our arrival had caused. But last night was no time for petty vanity—for I was afraid. The man with me was a stranger, of whom I knew nothing. I had known Vorslav the friend and adviser, Vorslav the benefactor. But this man was neither. He was Vorslav the lover, and I was afraid.

When he came for me, I sensed this intangible something which made a different man of him, a man I did not know—and just a few hours before I had read his play, "Margot."

I could not rid my mind of the ugly stories of his fascination and his brutality. Mordine—poor broken Mordine—had told me: "Vorslav's love destroys utterly." Like a schoolgirl who, terrified, reads a ghost story to the end, my interest overcame my terror.

Our little dining room was totally different from the garish room downstairs. There was not light enough to see it in detail, but in the hangings, and the rug on the floor, there was an insistent suggestion of softness and luxury. The table, with its delicate lace cover and with its flat central bowl of orchids, seemed brilliant in the surrounding gloom—the flickering glow of unshaded candles in carved silver candelabra being the only light. When I smelled the faint perfume that was in the air, the picture of a palm-shaded court, with its central tinkling fountain and masses of glowing tropical flowers, came instantly to my mind. Yes, along with the myriad other things he knows, Vorslav appreciates the power of physical surroundings in keeping with mental conditions.

It was here that Vorslav told me that he loved me. Surrounded by rich hang-

ings and under the subtle influence of soft lights and elusive perfumes, the great Vorslav made love to me, the woman that Paris calls "the Woman of Snow."

I shall not attempt to repeat his words. It would be as if I gave you raw paints and asked you to imagine them blended in a master's picture. The words were beautiful, but unless you could sit across a table from him in a shadowed room, as I did, and hear them in his wonderfully soft, full tones, watching the changing expression of his face as you listened, you could never appreciate their compelling appeal. Our table was small, and the candelabra stood, one on either side, close to the edge. The light from the candles seemed to center in the face opposite me—Vorslav's vivid, arrogant face.

Have you ever dreamed that a huge something, as black and formless as chaos, presses relentlessly down, down on you; and you fight with every ounce of your puny strength to push it back, so that you can breathe—and find it immovable? If you have, you can guess something of my sensation. I was horribly afraid, and at the same time, I was fascinated. I knew that I was going to do as he wished—and I loathed myself.

With the picture of Margot still in my mind—every terrible detail vivid—I heard my voice say that I loved him; that I would do anything, go anywhere he wished. I wonder why he showed me the picture of Margot, and on the same day demanded that I follow in her footsteps? I had seen and knew the only end for a woman who loved Vorslav—another Louise Ardoux, a wreck of a woman with eyes that had seen too much. Yet nothing mattered if only he would smile at me.

He rose from his seat, and I knew that in another second I should be crushed tight in his arms. That would mark the end—and I should be the loser.

Then the door behind him opened. "Monsieur Briguet has instructed me to say that in ten minutes it will be twelve o'clock," the intruder announced. The door was only half opened and left the

speaker in the shadow. The blur of a white shirt front and the hazy outline of a black-clothed figure was all that I could see in the gloom of the hallway.

But the light fell full on his left hand, which rested on the dark wood of the door facing. It was white and slender, but strong—and the little finger was cut off at the third joint.

Mechanically Vorslav drew out his watch and glanced at it. Then, surprised, he held it to his ear. It was five minutes after eleven. Furiously angry, he turned to the door behind him, but the speaker was gone. Wondering at his towering rage, which seemed out of all proportion to the gravity of the mistake, I watched him go out of the door and down the stairs.

Curiously detached, I listened to his angry voice and the apologetic replies of old Père Briguet. "But I assure you, monsieur, I sent no one to your door. Which waiter was it that came?"

"I don't know. He was gone before I saw him."

"It must have been that stupid Gustave. The others have been with me long and I have trained them myself. But Gustave—bah—he is a fool. There he is now; I will ask him. Gustave!"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Why did you announce to Monsieur Vorslav that it was the hour of closing? I gave no such order."

"Me? I have not been off this floor

all night. Henri told us that he himself would serve Monsieur Vorslav, and that he wanted none of us upstairs."

"Either Gustave is a liar, or one of those you have trained so carefully yourself does poor credit to his teacher," Vorslav sneered contemptuously.

"Could you be mistaken?" old Père Briguet quavered hopefully. "I have been here all night, and since Henri served your coffee, half an hour ago, I remember seeing no waiter pass upstairs."

"Mistaken! Of course not. Some stupid *garçon* anxious to finish a day's work slipped by while you nodded."

"But what would monsieur have me do? I will gladly make any reparation."

"There's nothing to do now. It is too late." Then I heard him remount the stairs.

Vorslav looked keenly into my face as he returned to the table. "Come," he said. "This stupid occurrence has spoiled my evening." I knew this was not the reason, but said nothing as he slipped my cloak over my shoulders. I was dazed. Like a person who has stood on the edge of a precipice, powerless to withstand an impulse to plunge down, down to the hard, sharp stones at the foot, saved not a second too soon by a restraining hand, I was too weak to undergo the exertion of speaking. With one glance Vorslav had seen that his charm was broken, and I was myself again—the Woman of Snow.



PROGRESS—Changing the dinner hour from noon to seven o'clock.



OCTOGENARIAN—Your rich uncle.



THINK before you kiss.

MADemoiselle PLATO*

An Unplatonic Object Lesson

By Curtis Dunham

CHARACTERS

VIOLET (*a wise virgin*)
ARCHIE (*in art for love's sake*)
ROSE (*a wife*)
BILL (*a husband*)

TIME: A. D. 1913.

PLACE: *The Carmine Core of Art Studio Life in New York.*

SCENE—ARCHIE's studio in the Michael Angelo Apartments. A high window on the right admits desirable north light, though ARCHIE seldom rises early enough in the afternoon to find it at its best. An easel stands beneath it. To the left of a chair fronting the easel is a low stand containing brushes and a palette, also tubes of real paint. Beneath the high window stands a double bed with a silken coverlet and lace-edged pillows. Do not jump at unworthy conclusions. That the bed is a proper art accessory is shown by the circumstance that its outlines have been roughly sketched upon the canvas on the easel. The silken coverlet is long enough to be turned up, completely concealing the pillows; and the spring mattress is so weak and accommodating that a person lying upon it beneath the coverlet is so perfectly hidden that the bed escapes any suspicion of being occupied. Near the center of the stage is a library table with a large armchair at its left. On the table are some magazines, a pack of playing cards and an electric drop light shining dimly at half-power. On the left, opposite the bed, is a mantel containing several photographs. Two crossed swords hang upon the wall above the mantel. At the left are two doors, one leading to the public corridor and the other opening into ARCHIE's bedroom.

By the dim half-light from the electric lamp on the table the corridor door is seen to open, admitting ARCHIE and the reluctant figure of VIOLET. She wears a black satin half-mask and an opera cloak over a "Carmen" masquerade costume; he is in evening dress under a long topcoat.

ARCHIE (*as he closes the door and turns the key*)

(*He turns and tries to kiss her; she keeps out of his reach.*)

Here we are, little one. I am the happiest and luckiest of young artists, alone in his studio with the belle of the ball!

VIOLET

No, no! I won't stay—I'll go back to

*Copyright, 1913. All stage rights secured by the author.

the ball. You New York artists are all crazy—but there's safety in numbers—

ARCHIE

I'm not crazy—I'm in love!

VIOLET

You begged me to come to your studio and pose for your new picture, "Mademoiselle Plato." You promised to be good.

ARCHIE (*at the table*)

I asked you to *pose* for "Mademoiselle Plato," not *be* "Mademoiselle Plato"! (*He flicks the light on full.*)

VIOLET (*seeing the bed*)

Oh—oh, a bed! Deceiver! You begged me to come to your studio, and you bring me to your—

ARCHIE (*indicating the door at the back*)

My bedroom is in there. This is my studio.

VIOLET (*doubtfully*)

Then why this bed—in your studio?

ARCHIE

For my model.

VIOLET (*shocked*)

Your model? She sleeps here in your studio? Brazen creature! Oh—oh! (*She steals toward the corridor door.*) Dreadful! I shall go back to the ball.

ARCHIE

No, no—actually you make me blush. The bed is in the picture. "Mademoiselle Plato" lies on the bed—masked like you, just as she comes from the ball.

VIOLET

Oh—for the picture. That's quite different.

(*Evidently satisfied, she takes off her wrap and throws it on the armchair by the table.*)

ARCHIE

That's the idea, little one. (*He puts his topcoat and hat with VIOLET'S wrap and quickly changes into his painting jacket, which he takes from the chair in front of the easel.*) Ah, now we understand each other! (*He puts his arm*

around her waist; she slips defily out of his grasp.)

VIOLET

I'm not so sure that we do. You are from St. Louis, via the Quartier Latin, and I was *born* in Missouri!

ARCHIE (*effusively*)

Then I'll "show you"—how I love you!

(*He tries to embrace her—she eludes him.*)

VIOLET

First you will "show me" more than that.

ARCHIE (*ardently*)

Impossible!

VIOLET (*quickly*)

Wasn't it also "impossible" in the case of the poor little "home town" girl you left behind you—eh?

(*ARCHIE stares at her, but it is soon plain that he suspects nothing.*)

ARCHIE

Ah, slanders! Slander always pursues the truly great.—Sweetheart, just one little look without that cruel mask between us!

VIOLET (*at the easel*)

Wait—not yet. Tell me the story of the picture.

ARCHIE (*a bit sullenly*)

The girl, wearing a mask as you are, lies on the bed, and, leaning over her in an attitude of hopeless passion is the disappointed lover—

VIOLET (*with satisfaction*)

Ah, the *disappointed* lover!

ARCHIE

Yes, she disappointed him. That's why the picture is called "Mademoiselle Plato."

VIOLET (*with approval*)

It will be a very proper picture. I am ready to pose. (*She calmly turns her back to him.*) Just loosen me up a bit, please.

ARCHIE (*dazed*)

Er—you mean I shall unbutton you up the back?

VIOLET (*yawning*)

Yes, please—the four top buttons. (ARCHIE *obliges*. *Growing bold, he kisses the back of her neck.* VIOLET *merely yawns again.*) While you put me in the picture I think I'll take a little nap.

(*She calmly lies on the bed in the desired pose and breathes a soft sigh of content. For a moment ARCHIE is doubtful. Then he throws himself on his knees beside the bed.*)

ARCHIE (*with genuine passion*)

Angel! Darling, I adore you!

VIOLET (*smiling, with another yawn*)

Remember, I am "Mademoiselle Plato."

ARCHIE

Oh, sweetheart, take off that cruel mask!

VIOLET (*sleepily*)

My poor, silly Archie! Is not the mask in the picture? Go on with your painting—while the painting's good.

(*She turns her head restfully on the pillow, and is quiet. ARCHIE gazes at her for a moment, then rises and goes to the easel. He takes up a crayon and poises it, looking with longing eyes at the charming figure on the bed. Presently he shakes himself and begins to sketch. Soon he is distracted by faint moans from the bed, mingled with sighs. VIOLET pretends to sleep. ARCHIE rises and paces the floor in agitation. Suddenly he goes to the bed. In the attitude of a passionate lover, he leans lower and lower above VIOLET's masked face. His lips almost touch hers.*)

VIOLET (*as though in her sleep*)

Oh! Oh—no; no! (*She sits up suddenly, rubbing her eyes.*) Oh, such a terrible vision! Give me your hand! (*She takes ARCHIE's hand, rises and leads him quickly down to the lamp, looking at his palm. She is suddenly much agitated and reproachful.*) Ah, it is true! I see it in your hand. You are married—you have a wife!

ARCHIE (*earnestly*)

No—I swear it! Only engaged, four years ago—in St. Louis—

VIOLET

Aha! So it was *not* "slander of a truly great man," after all!

ARCHIE (*protesting volubly*)

She didn't mind. She was only seventeen. Why, it wasn't two years before she ran away herself—to Milan, to study singing. She has forgotten me—long ago.

VIOLET (*pointedly*)

Ah! You believe, then, that she is now a great singer—as you are a great artist?

ARCHIE (*in a burst of candor*)

She will be great. I'm rotten—this is all a bluff. I wanted to have some fun—some fun while I was yet young—

VIOLET (*inspecting his palm*)

"Some fun!" Ah! I read it all here—plenty of "fun," pretty models, fascinating actresses, artists' balls— (*She throws aside his hand scornfully.*) And married women!

ARCHIE

No, no! That's all wrong—

VIOLET (*fiercely*)

I will know all—everything! The cards—have you a pack of cards?

ARCHIE (*falling into her trap*)

There—on the table. But I defy them to show—

VIOLET (*feverishly arranging the cards*)

Oh! She is a blonde woman— (ARCHIE *starts noticeably.*) A pretty blonde woman—

ARCHIE

Oh, confound it! She is only one of those romantic married women who take a fancy to unprotected bachelors and pursue them till they wish they were dead. Lord! If I could only shake her off!

VIOLET (*reading the cards tragically*)

A large, violent, dark man! (ARCHIE *gasps and starts.*) Beware of a large, violent, dark man!

ARCHIE (*visibly frightened*)

That describes Rose's husband! Oh, Lord! (*He pauses. Then suddenly, to VIOLET*) Look here, little one, I love you to distraction. I'll marry you tomorrow. I—I've had all the fun I want!

VIOLET (*severely*)

You will be a man of honor. You will marry the St. Louis girl! (*A violent ring at the door. ARCHIE jumps.*)

ARCHIE

Good Lord! It's Bill—that is, her husband. (*He walks about, tearing his hair.*) No use arguing with Bill. It's all off—I'm a dead man!

VIOLET

Before you open the door, please will you button me up the back?

ARCHIE (*buttoning, in a panic*)

You will be compromised. Go into my bedroom. (*The doorbell rings again.*) Hurry! Into my bedroom! You will be compromised!

VIOLET

If I am to be compromised, I prefer this studio to a strange gentleman's bedroom.

ARCHIE (*at the door*)

Then crawl under the bed.
(*The bell rings more exigently.*)

VIOLET

Everybody looks under a bed. I'll get in the bed!

(*She throws back the silken coverlet, lies on the bed and draws the coverlet up smoothly over her head and both pillows. The weak springs sink under her—the bed gives no sign of her presence in it.*)

ARCHIE

You're crazy!

VIOLET (*bobbing her head out*)

Admit Mr.—Bill.

(*She bobs her head back under the coverlet. The bell rings steadily.*)

ARCHIE (*at the door, trembling in every limb*)

That's Bill! S—someone's told him all—all! (*The door is violently shaken.*)

Good Lord! I c—can't face Bill in that state of mind! (*He looks wildly around.*) Shall I hide in my bedroom? (*The door rattles.*) N—no! Bill would b—break in and chop me up with my own razors! (*There are loud bangs on the door. ARCHIE jumps in terror. He looks where VIOLET lies hidden under the smooth coverlet, suddenly sneaks to the opposite side of the bed, raises the edge of the coverlet, rolls in and covers up his head. VIOLET sits up, throwing back the coverlet.*)

VIOLET (*to ARCHIE*)

What! You dare get in—in here with me!

ARCHIE (*trembling, pleading*)

Oh—only in—in a platonic way.

VIOLET

So! My platonic friend, you are a coward!

(*The doorbell rings steadily.*)

ARCHIE

B—but you d—don't know Bill!

VIOLET (*starting to rise*)

I'll know Bill in a minute—I'm going to let him in!

ARCHIE (*restraining her*)

No, no! Hide with me here. Bill will break in, but he won't f—find us. He'll go away without shedding my blood! (*The door rattles.*) I h—hate bloodshed—I'm a m—man of peace.

VIOLET

You are a coward!

ARCHIE

I want to live. I love you. Marry me—tomorrow!

VIOLET (*indignant*)

You dare to propose marriage to me in—in circumstances like these?
(*They are sitting in the bed, face to face.*)

ARCHIE

The circumstances, it seems to me, make marriage most—desirable.
(*The bell rings, the door rattles.*)

VIOLET

Get up and open the door, or I will never speak to you again!

ARCHIE (*quitting the bed—theatrically*)

Be it so! But I shall sell my life dear!
(*He rushes to the mantel and takes down the two swords, and goes to the door with a sword in each hand.*)

VIOLET

Ah! That is brave! Now I love you—almost.

(*She draws the coverlet smoothly over her head. ARCHIE unlocks the door and throws it open. ROSE enters—a blonde matron with the air of an outraged queen.*)

ARCHIE (*dropping the sword points—dazed*)

It—it's Rose!

ROSE (*in a rage, brushing past him*)

Where's that woman? Where is she?
(*She sails about the studio, looking everywhere, followed by ARCHIE awkwardly and absent-mindedly carrying the two swords—as he does during the whole scene.*)

ARCHIE (*soothingly*)

But, Rose—dear—

ROSE

That woman! Where is she?
(*Looks under the bed.*)

ARCHIE

Really, Rose dear, to come here at this time of night—morning! Suppose your husband—

ROSE (*turning on him*)

It's rather late in the day for you to talk about my husband! I don't care! I don't care that much! (*Snaps her fingers.*) Let him come. I hope he will—and shoot you! It's less than you deserve. Where have you hidden that woman? (*She notes the open bedroom door and rushes in that direction.*) Ah! she's in there!

ARCHIE (*following with swords*)

Oh, I say, Rose—that's my bedroom!
(*ROSE rushes into the bedroom followed by ARCHIE. VIOLET's head bobs up.*)

VIOLET (*giggling*)

He-he-hel!

(*She bobs back again, as ROSE re-enters, followed by ARCHIE.*)

ARCHIE

Now Rose—be sensible—

ROSE (*turning on him, stamping her foot*)

How dare you speak to me when you have a woman concealed here?

ARCHIE

Why be so suspicious? You can see for yourself—

ROSE

Suspicious! You give me sufficient reason to be suspicious.

ARCHIE (*becoming more cheerful*)

It is true that I am interested in the girls at times—but only in a platonic way.

(*He assumes a virtuous expression.*)

ROSE

In a platonic way—you! Bah!
(*Smothered laughter from the bed.*) What's that? (*She approaches the bed.*)

ARCHIE (*intercepting her—nervously*)

It—it's my dog. He has a cold—it's catching!

ROSE

Can a dog laugh? You have a woman here!

ARCHIE (*plaintively*)

A—a woman? Why, Rose, don't you know me better than that?

ROSE (*showing a telegram*)

Hypocrite! Read that!

ARCHIE (*reading the telegram*)

"It may interest you to know that that fool is entertaining a lady in the Michael Angelo tonight. Signed, A Friend." (*To ROSE*) Ah, an anonymous telegram! (*ROSE seizes the telegram and tucks it into her bosom.*)

ROSE

Such information is always anonymous—and always true! (*Smothered laughter from VIOLET.*) It's from the bed! I saw the covers move! (*VIOLET*

thrusts a slippered foot out beyond the edge of the coverlet, wiggling it maliciously.)
There's a woman in that bed!

ARCHIE (*weakly*)

Only in a platonic way.

(VIOLET *sits up in bed, laughing heartily.* ROSE *turns a withering glance upon ARCHIE.*)

ROSE

A masked woman! (ARCHIE *drops the swords on the floor and throws up his hands in despair.* ROSE *shrivels him with a look.*) Not one word, sir! I will give this person a piece of my mind! I will attend to you later! (VIOLET *quits the bed and confronts ROSE calmly and with modest deference.*)

VIOLET

Madame, are you the wife of this gentleman?

ROSE (*taken aback*)

I—no—but—

VIOLET (*with polite decision*)

Then, madame, this affair does not concern you at all.

ROSE (*perplexed*)

Archie, what do you say to that?

ARCHIE (*seeing his chance—boldly*)

By Jove, she's right!

ROSE (*dropping limply into a chair*)

This is my reward, after sacrificing everything—my family, my husband—

(*She breaks off with sobs.* ARCHIE *is startled.*)

ARCHIE

Bill! Does Bill know!—

(*The doorbell rings sharply.*)

ROSE

That's my husband! I recognize his ring!

ARCHIE (*dancing about in terror*)

Oh, Lord! I might have known it would happen! Oh, if I ever get out of this scrape I'll marry and settle down—I swear I will!

(*The doorbell rings furiously. A harsh, bass voice is heard uttering profane de-*

mands and sounds of rage. ROSE *jumps up, wringing her hands.*)

ROSE

Lost! I'm lost! There's no escape!

VIOLET (*to ROSE*)

I will save you. Do as I did—get in the bed.

ROSE

In that bed? Never! I'll die first!

(*She runs about the studio distractedly. The door is violently shaken, to an accompaniment of growls.*)

VIOLET (*to ROSE*)

In another minute your husband will break in the door. You'd better do as I did—hide in the bed. You never would have looked for me there.

ROSE (*wringing her hands*)

Why did I ever get into this miserable flirtation with a mere artist when my darling, gentle Bill loves me so!

(*The growls swell into roars. The door is shaken on its hinges. ROSE suddenly tumbles into the bed and VIOLET draws the coverlet smoothly over her.*)

VIOLET (*to ARCHIE*)

And you, my platonic friend, you will tell the gentleman outside that you cannot open the door because there is a lady with you.

ARCHIE (*recovering his nerve*)

Little one, you're a wonder! (*He opens the door slightly.*) I can't let you in, sir. Really, it is quite impossible. You see—it would compromise a lady.

VOICE (*hoarse with rage*)

It's my wife, you scoundrell!

ARCHIE (*in confidence*)

Oh, no, I assure you, sir—only a lady from the masquerade ball.

VOICE (*sounding dangerous*)

You don't fool me with that moth-eaten excuse. Let me in or I'll come in!

VIOLET (*speaking distinctly*)

Admit the gentleman—it is all the same to me.

(ARCHIE throws open the door, bowing politely as BILL enters. He is a large, dark man in a violent rage. He wears a fur coat over pajamas, with a top hat, and carries a stick. He ignores ARCHIE and approaches VIOLET, who stands with her back to him.)

BILL

Ah! So I've caught you! Go off masquerading, do you, while I'm kept digging night and day to find the money? Why don't you say something?

VIOLET (facing him)

Sir!

BILL (much embarrassed)

I beg your pardon. You—you are not my wife.

VIOLET

I quite agree with you, sir.

BILL (doggedly)

But she's here! I'll find her! (He rushes into ARCHIE's bedroom, and out again. ARCHIE and VIOLET regard him with smiling composure.) You can't fool me! I'll find her yet! (He runs around the bed, growling and snarling.)

ARCHIE

Make yourself quite at home, sir.

VIOLET

Why don't you look under the bed?

BILL

Confound it, I will!

(He gets down on his hands and knees and looks under the bed, then rises sheepishly.)

VIOLET (deeply interested)

Pardon, sir—perhaps your wife is in the bed?

BILL (desperately)

Spare me your satire. I admit I am that most ridiculous creature on earth, a jealous husband. But look at this telegram, which came after I was in bed.

(He hands ARCHIE the telegram.)

ARCHIE (reading)

"If you should miss your wife to-night, look for her at the Michael Angelo. Signed, A Friend."

BILL

Naturally I immediately went to my wife's room. As she was missing, I came here as fast as I could. I knew she had a weakness for artist chaps.

ARCHIE (brazenly)

My dear fellow, why do you make me the goat? This building is a regular artists' rabbit hutch, crammed full of painting bunnies. Why, right over my head—

BILL (raving again)

A-a-a-h! The thieving scoundrels! Good night!

(Leaving his hat on the table, he rushes out, banging the door after him. VIOLET goes to the bed and turns back the coverlet.)

VIOLET (to ROSE)

Now is your chance. Get home as quickly as you can—let your husband find you snug in your bed.

ROSE (quitting the bed. To VIOLET, stiffly)

Accept my 'thanks' for a valuable lesson. (To ARCHIE, as she brushes past him, making for the door) As for you, sir—never dare to cross my path again! (There is a sudden loud stamping of feet overhead. ROSE makes a hurried exit.)

ARCHIE (with a grin—pointing to the ceiling)

That's Bill, worrying another painting bunny.

VIOLET (removing her mask—smiling into his eyes)

Archie!

ARCHIE (recognizing her)

Violet! My own little St. Louis girl! So it was you who sent those telegrams—

VIOLET (giving him her hands)

Because I love you, Archie—and—I wanted you for myself!

(They embrace. The doorbell rings. The door opens and ROSE rushes in.)

ROSE

Save me! My husband's car is at the door. The chauffeur would see me going out—

ARCHIE

Go into my bedroom. Your husband will be back for his hat. Then he will go away and the coast will be clear for you.

ROSE

Oh, thank you!

(She goes into the bedroom and closes the door. There is a gentle rap on the corridor door, and BILL enters, much agitated—but not with rage.)

BILL (to ARCHIE)

My wife is in this building, searching for me.

ARCHIE

Nonsense—

BILL (almost weeping)

Alas, it is only too true! She dropped this telegram in the corridor. *(He reads ROSE's telegram.)* "It may interest you to know that that fool is entertaining a lady in the Michael Angelo tonight. Signed, A Friend." *(To ARCHIE and VIOLET, tearfully)* It is addressed to my wife. I am the fool referred to. I am discovered—at last, unless you save me! This is the work of that little model down the corridor—

ARCHIE (sternly)

Little model?—What! You, Bill? Well, I never would have believed it of you!

BILL

Never again! Only save me—keep it from Rose— *(Footsteps are heard in the corridor.)* That's Rose! I know her footsteps! Hide me!

VIOLET (to ARCHIE)

In the bed?

ARCHIE (to BILL, sternly)

You've just one chance. *(Throws back coverlet.)* Get in here.

BILL (weakly)

Anything you say, Archie.

(He lies on the bed. ARCHIE draws the coverlet up neatly over him.)

ARCHIE (to VIOLET)

That's a great bed. I'm going to get a patent on it

(The bedroom door opens and ROSE enters, pale and trembling.)

ROSE (in a gasping whisper)

I looked out in the corridor—saw our chauffeur—he warned me—my husband coming back—here—for me! Rely on your kindness—once more—

(ROSE goes quickly and silently to the back of the bed and slips in under the coverlet.)

BILL (popping his head out)

What was that?

(ROSE's head pops out. Both sit up stiffly in the bed and stare at each other.)

ROSE and BILL (together, with fingers raised)

WHAT—ARE—YOU—DOING—HERE?

(ARCHIE and VIOLET, with their backs discreetly turned on the bed, are helping each other on with their wraps. ROSE and BILL, sitting side by side against the pillows, with the silken coverlet across their knees, achieve the triumphant obvious at the same instant.)

ROSE and BILL (together, beseechingly)

DARLING—WILL—YOU—EVER—FORGIVE—MY—UNJUST—SUSPICIONS?

(They embrace.)

VIOLET (leading ARCHIE to the door)

Come, my platonic friend. This is no place for us.

CURTAIN.



UN VOL

Par Michel Epyu

LES dernières lumières venaient de s'éteindre dans une villa des environs d'Antibes. Il était près d'une heure du matin. Une fenêtre du rez-de-chaussée qui avait été éclairée toute la soirée s'assombrit soudain. La clarté illumina des vitres au second étage, puis disparut au bout de quelques instants. Et, dans la douce nuit bleue et parfumée, au milieu des arbres du jardin qui se confondaient en une seule masse sombre, la façade de la maison endormie fut toute blanche sous la lune.

La demie sonna au loin. Alors, un homme sortit des massifs d'où il avait épié la maison et s'avança avec précaution vers la fenêtre qui avait brillé si longtemps cette nuit-là. Il avait un petit sac à outils en bandoulière et était chaussé d'espadrilles. Il découpa prestement un carreau de vitre, ouvrit la fenêtre et sauta dans la chambre. Là, il sortit de son sac une lanterne sourde à la clarté de laquelle il inspecta attentivement la pièce où il se trouvait.

C'était un petit cabinet de travail confortable et luxueux, bien pourvu de livres, de tableaux, de bibelots, de fauteuils et de divans. Dans un angle du fond, derrière un paravent, un mignon coffre-fort était scellé dans la muraille. Devant la fenêtre, une large table à écrire où de nombreuses feuilles de papier en désordre étaient couvertes d'une écriture fine. Le cambrioleur considéra de loin ces paperasses: "J'oubliais, monologua-t-il à voix basse, que j'ai affaire à une femme de lettres! Et si ces bas bleus ont le mérite, à mon point de vue, de vivre seules, elles ont par contre le défaut de ne jamais mettre beaucoup de fafiots dans leur coffre-fort. Cependant Jeanne Mairfond doit

gagner gros, à en juger par le nombre de bouquins d'elle qu'on voit partout! Enfin, nous allons bien voir!"

En se dirigeant vers le coffre-fort, le voleur s'arrêta un moment pour examiner de près une merveilleuse statuette d'ivoire qui se trouvait sur la cheminée. . . .

Pierre Daroz était un connaisseur. Il avait autrefois étudié l'anatomie et les premiers principes de la sculpture. Cela avait été une de ses marottes d'un moment, mais il avait lâché l'art pour les affaires, puis les affaires pour l'agriculture . . . et ainsi de suite, jusqu'à ce que de débâcle en débâcle et de déchéance en déchéance, il fut devenu voleur de profession, après avoir achevé de perdre les derniers vestiges de son patrimoine sur les tapis verts. Pauvre garçon! Ce n'avait pas été entièrement sa faute. Il avait été élevé sans tendresse par des parents austères qui n'avaient jamais su que le châtier, le corriger, contrecarrer ses idées, ses plans et ses aspirations même les plus légitimes. A dix-huit ans, il avait follement aimé une jeune fille pauvre dont la beauté et l'intelligence brillante n'avaient pas paru, aux yeux de M. Daroz père, constituer une dot suffisante. Ce fut alors que, follement désespéré, tête chaude et cœur brisé, il déserta la maison paternelle et se jeta dans les pires aventures.

Et maintenant, encore jeune, fort, bien membre, d'esprit lucide, il aurait pu de mille manières se refaire une vie, mais il aimait trop l'existence dangereuse, le risque, le guet, les périls, les frémissements des nerfs au moment de dépister la police ou de chloroformer un gardien de banque.

. . . En contemplant le splendide bibe-

lot d'ivoire, aux lignes élégantes et délicates, Daroz eut un rictus amer, puis il se détourna vivement et s'en alla attaquer le coffre-fort. Celui-ci n'était pas extrêmement compliqué et, au bout de quelques minutes, Pierre Daroz en avait forcé la porte sans que ses outils eussent produit sur l'acier le plus léger grincement. Et d'ailleurs, le cambrioleur était bien tranquille, sachant que Mlle Mairfond était seule dans la villa avec une toute jeune femme de chambre.

Il projeta sans hâte les rayons de sa lanterne à l'intérieur du coffre: il y avait deux compartiments: celui du bas était occupé par une assez maigre liasse de billets de banque et quelques bagues. Pierre eut une grimace de désappointement. "Quelle purée, ces femmes de lettres!" marmotta-t-il. Il n'aperçut dans le compartiment supérieur qu'un paquet de papiers qu'il attira à lui. C'étaient des lettres attachées par une cordelette de soie. Il les feuilleta pour s'assurer que de bons billets de mille n'y fussent pas dissimulés... Mais, ce faisant, il eut un violent sursaut et s'oublia jusqu'à proférer, presque à pleine voix, une exclamation de surprise: il venait de lire la suscription d'une des enveloppes: "Mademoiselle Jeanne Domfrain"... et cela était de son écriture!

C'étaient ses lettres, ses propres lettres d'amour, celles qu'avec fièvre et enthousiasme passionné, il avait écrit à Jeanne Domfrain, cette fille étincelante que les strictes conventions sociales l'avaient empêché d'épouser.

Comment donc se trouvaient-elle là? Pierre Daroz se passa la main sur le front. Ses pensées tourbillonnèrent à la recherche de l'explication. "Eh parbleu! se dit-il enfin, c'est simple! Jeanne Mairfond et Jeanne Domfrain ne sont qu'une seule et même personne! Je sais que Jeanne s'est acquise depuis peu une grande réputation littéraire... Et ce nom de Mairfond est son pseudonyme, c'est l'anagramme de Domfrain! Oh! que je sois venu la voler, elle!"

Il s'assura qu'il ne se trompait point en examinant l'écriture des manuscrits déposés sur la table, puis il revint au

coffre. Il tenait toujours le paquet de lettres. Il éprouva un irrésistible désir de les relire et s'assit sur le tapis après avoir posé sa lanterne à côté de lui.

... Et il lut, il but plutôt à longs traits, cette prose enflammée d'un adolescent ardent et passionnément épris... "Que j'étais fou!" se disait-il de temps en temps en reprenant une autre lettre. Et, plus il lisait, plus il retrouvait vif et inoubliable son magnifique amour d'autrefois. Il relisait posément maintenant, oublieux de tout le reste. Et les serments solennels, les radieuses promesses, les cris de passion folle, toutes les belles phrases enchantées l'enivraient à nouveau... Etait-ce bien lui qui avait écrit ces choses?

"Je suis à vous, mon adorée, pour le temps et pour l'éternité... Mon amour n'est pas une flambée qui s'élève et qui passe, c'est un don de tout mon être, de toute ma substance, de toute mon âme, de toute ma vie..."

Et encore: "L'amour est un régénérateur divin; j'ai le pressentiment secret qu'il fera de grandes choses en moi. J'aurai du génie, Jeanne chérie, si vous le demandez, car mon amour me grandira tellement..."

... Et depuis! Pierre Daroz laissa tomber les lettres sur ses genoux et se couvrit le visage de ses mains. En cette heure brune et recueillie, des pensées graves naquirent en lui. Il repassa toute sa vie et la vit toute encombrée à la fois de beaux rêves et d'actes criminels. Ah, comme il aurait pu être autre, si une sincère tendresse de femme l'avait enveloppé, si de doux yeux aimants s'étaient penchés vers lui avec confiance, avec amour! Mais on lui avait toujours dit qu'il était méchant; il l'était devenu! Et la seule créature qui l'eut aimé, il en avait été séparé!

Cependant, un grand travail se faisait en lui. Ses souvenirs tumultueux le torturaient. Ses yeux se remplirent de larmes. Il se leva et vint s'accouder à la fenêtre ouverte: l'aurore ne paraissait pas encore, mais déjà une sorte de frisson venant de la mer passait dans les jardins embaumés des villas princières. Une pureté sainte, une tendresse surhumaine flottaient dans l'atmosphère

divine et les étoiles étaient comme des prunelles de déesses qui regardaient anxieusement le voleur en pleurs pour susciter en lui des pensées toutes neuves. Alors une indicible fraîcheur imprégna son âme, un lumineux espoir se leva devant lui. "Elle m'aimait, se dit-il enfin, et rien ne prouve qu'elle ne m'aime plus. . . . Ah, quel bel amour si seulement. . . . Eh bien, je vais essayer une grande chose!"

Il retourna au coffre-fort, y replaça tout avec soin, ne conservant qu'une des plus ardentes de ses lettres d'amour, et sur une carte qu'il laissa bien en vue, il écrivit: "J'étais venu pour autre chose, mais j'ai trouvé mes vieilles lettres dans votre coffre-fort. Je ne vous en dérobe qu'une: celle dont vous me disiez qu'elle vous avait fait pleurer. . . . Je vais tâcher de changer de vie et d'expier. . . . Si je réussis, vous le

saurez . . . à moins que vous ne soyez mariée d'ici là. Pierre D. . . ."

Deux ans après, un gentleman sonna à la porte de l'appartement que Jeanne Mairfond occupait à Paris.

Lorsqu'il entra au salon, la célèbre femme de lettres poussa un grand cri:

—C'est vous, Pierre!

—Oui, Jeanne, répondit-il. Je viens parce que j'ai expié . . . autant du moins qu'il était humainement possible. J'ai remboursé au double tout ce que j'ai dérobé autrefois, et là où je n'ai pas retrouvé les anciens possesseurs, j'ai donné aux établissements de bienfaisance. . . . J'ai beaucoup souffert, Jeanne, mais ceci n'est rien . . . je voudrais, je voudrais surtout votre absolution à vous. . . .

Pour toute réponse, elle lui tendit les bras.



L'ÂME DES CHOSES

Par Florian-Parmentier

HEUREUX celui dont l'âme atteint l'Âme des Choses,
Et qui peut abriter son Rêve dans leur cœur!
Il épanche sa peine au sourire des roses,
Et le soir assoupit sa fièvre en sa fraîcheur.

Il voit Dieu dans les champs riches d'apothéoses;
Et, parmi les remous d'un décor enchanteur,
Il sent de ses défunts s'ouvrir les âmes closes,
Et des yeux de l'Aimée il revoit la couleur.

Il croit ouïr sa mère, au son lointain des cloches,
Qui tousse, et doucement murmure des reproches,
Parce qu'il n'a pas fait sa prière à genoux . . .

Et tout dans la nature est pour lui simple et doux;
La foule le repousse et les choses l'accueillent,
Car leur âme est la sœur de ceux qui se recueillent.



L'AMOUR ne meurt jamais de besoin, mais souvent d'indigestion.

WAIL OF A WAITRESS

By Ethel M. Kelley

THEY'RE all alike, in spite of what they claim.
There's always one that finds you pretty tame,
And he you think is different from the rest;
It ain't no sign, because you like him best,
He's got the only features fit to frame.

You think for you he'd go through fire and flame,
And love you still if you was blind or lame,
Not knowing, when you put 'em to the test,
They're all alike.

No matter what he does, he ain't to blame.
There can't nobody more than speak his name.
Before you feel a flutter in your breast;
But when he comes you act like all possessed,
And he don't know it's *you* that ain't the same.
They're all alike.

II

I LOST my job. I broke another plate,
And sassed the lady supe, and got in late;
And when tonight I went to get my pay,
I thought they'd dock me, in the same old way;
Instead of which, they crossed me off the slate.

Though I do say it, I know how to "wait."
I ain't the kind that does the work they hate;
But that won't cut no figure when I say
I lost my job.

He used to think this restaurant was great,
And all one year he tried to make a date
To have his dinners with me every day.
I guess that's why I always liked to stay.
Now that he's turned me down, it seems like fate
I lost my job.



TRUTH is personified as feminine—why, nobody knows.

REVIEWING A REVIEWER

By George Jean Nathan

BY way of variety, and in the interests of dramatic art and justice, I am going to devote myself this month to a criticism of the satirical comedy originally produced with considerable local success in Indiana, subsequently put on for a still current (albeit not lewdly lucrative) run in New York, and euphoniously entitled by its collaborators "GEORGE JEAN NATHAN."

The sharp Huneker, an excellent critic because, like all really good critics, he is regularly suspicious of himself, has introduced one of his critiques with the following words:

"Two decades ago, John M. Robertson, M.P., published two volumes chiefly concerned with the gentle art of criticism. Mr. Robertson introduced to the English-reading world the critical theories of Emile Hennequin, whose essays on Poe, Dostoevsky and Turgenev may be remembered. It is a cardinal doctrine of Hennequin and Robertson that as the personal element plays the chief role in everything the critic writes he himself should be the first to submit to a grilling: in a word, to be put through his paces and tell us in advance of his likes and dislikes, his prejudices and passions."

In this opinion I concur with engaging vehemence. Who am I that I should criticize the works of artists without being submitted to an enlightening and probably devastating criticism of myself? Who am I that I should find fault and not be found fault with; or again, on the other hand, that I should praise and not be praised? In spite of the thousands of ready volunteers who periodically endeavor to impress me with the answer to the query—an abashing and

distressing answer that invariably takes the form of playing more or less decoratively with the adjective "impudent" and, incidentally, a sport even engaged in now and again at my expense by some of my indignant elder colleagues—I, being a sufficiently subtle critic to measure the error of such a criticism, am still at a loss to know. I will grant that I am fairly honest as honesty goes these days. That is, I am not susceptible to flattery (save at the hands of young and lovely blondes dressed in dark blue and wearing violets—and as no young and lovely blonde dressed in dark blue and wearing violets has ever flattered me, this really constitutes no exception). I will grant that I am moderately intelligent. That is, I have learned to discount almost everything that was taught me, as well as almost everything the public and its professorial advisers agree to be incontrovertibly true. I will grant that I am not impressed by imposing names or by the reputations of yesterday that are attached to such names.

I will grant that I am given to intense prejudices, believing as I do that dramatic criticism amounts, in the fundamental main, to little more than the expression of the dubious opinions of an individual. Dramatic criticism is no more a profession, an art, than is acting. It is valuable only in so far as the individual practising it realizes that, even before his ink is dry, he may be wrong. I am prejudiced because I believe that in prejudice alone is there to be found criticism's justification. Every night, before going to bed, I substitute a recitation of these words of Shaw in the place once on a time occupied by prayers:

"Whoever has been through the ex-

perience of discussing criticism with a thorough, perfect and entire Ass, has been told that criticism should above all things be free from personal feeling. The excellence of Clement Scott's criticisms lies in their integrity as expressions of the warmest personal feeling and nothing else. They are alive; their admiration is sincere and moving; their resentment is angry and genuine. He may be sometimes maudlin on the one hand, sometimes unjust, unreasonable, violent and even ridiculous on the other; but he has never lost an inch of ground by that, any more than other critics have ever gained an inch by a cautious, cold, fastidious avoidance of the qualities of which such faults are the excesses. The average young university graduate would hang himself sooner than wear his heart on his sleeve before the world as Mr. Scott does. He has been trained to do nothing that could possibly involve error, failure, self-assertion or ridicule; and the results of this genteelly negative policy are about as valuable as those which might be expected by a person who should enter for a swimming race with a determination to do nothing that could possibly expose him to the risk of getting wet. Scott understands the value of Lassalle's dictum that 'History forgives mistakes and failures, but not want of conviction.'"

The best critics are the inconsistent critics. Show me a consistent critic, a critic who sets himself a critical creed and abides by that creed with never a sidestep, never a whispered doubt, and I will show you a critic who is generally wrong. The theater and its drama are as inconsistent institutions as the surface of this earthly sphere reveals. Dramatic criticism, if definitively and regularly consistent, becomes, therefore, as proportionately unsound as a brief on nose troubles written twenty-five years ago. Francisque Sarcey, a leader of French criticism, discloses himself to have been consistently inconsistent—and hence helpful, sane and inspiring—in his eight volumes of "Quarante Ans de Théâtre." Huneker, leader of the native confraternity, introduces himself to his flock with Walt Whitman's: "Do I contradict myself?

Very well, then, I contradict myself!" Ernest Chesneau, although not relevant here in the matter of vocation, is relevant through an adaptation of his words: "The only rule of great artists is as follows: Judge the past—and forget it!" Referring to this habit of critical consistency, Galsworthy not long ago correctly observed: "The trouble with the critic is his '*idée fixe*.' He has to print his opinion of an author's work, while other men have only to think it; and, when it comes to receiving a fresh impression of the same author, his already recorded words are liable to act upon him rather as the eyes of a snake upon a rabbit. Indeed, it must be very awkward, when you have definitely labeled an author this or that, to find from his next piece of work that he is the other as well. The critic who can make blank his soul of all he has said before may indeed exist—in paradise."

I lay claim to no fixed ideas. I have never had a fixed idea in all my jocund life. The best possible proofs of this lie in the facts that a number of years ago I looked upon a play of Charles Klein with kindly eyes and that I once wrote that "The Witching Hour" was sagacious drama. So far as my present more violent prejudices go—prejudices which are subject to change without notice—I may hazard to record the following:

I. I believe that the average playwright knows more about his play than all the actors, managers and stage producers concerned in its production put together; and that nine out of ten changes made in the manuscript by the latter are harmful to the play as an artistic product.

II. I believe that a badly made play with an idea is worth twenty perfectly constructed plays without ideas; and I am foolish enough to believe (to speak in practical terms) that the paying theater public does not give a tinker's dam for "technique." In this attitude, at least, the public is in accord with the most constructive and tonic criticism. I believe, furthermore, that one of the stubbornest handicaps under which the native drama rests is to be discovered in this same formidably named and insisted-upon thing

called "technique." The preaching of "rules for playwriting" centers the writer's mind upon "exits," "entrances" and other such nonsense and distracts it from thematic ideas. The "technique" of piano playing insists that the fingers be arched high above the keys. Some of the greatest pianists who ever lived (albeit not handsome lady-killers) assaulted the keys with flat and stubby fingers.

III. I believe that Mr. David Belasco is at present the most adept theatrical producer in America and, at the same time and in the same proportion, the greatest foe to nascent American dramatic art. And why? Because he is training the public to look for superlatively sumptuous stage properties, intricate and incongruous "lighting effects" and like externals; is causing the public to place a premium on such externals, and is thus assisting in their lack of appreciation of essentially worthy drama. Hence, other producers, having to follow the Belasco lead in this matter or suffer financial loss, must eventually aggravate the situation even more deeply.

IV. I believe that there is no such thing as a "daring" play. A play usually so described is either truthful or dirty. The "*Visite de Noces*" of Dumas fils, an intelligent transcript of the meanest ways of adultery, or the "*Evasion*" of Brieux, with its girl driven to the frontier of harlotry by the suggestive power of the heredity doctrine, are not "daring" plays in any sense of the word. A play like "*Hindle Wakes*," on the other hand (to make descent with an excruciating bump), generally characterized as "daring," is only false and an exhibition of literary smut.

V. At the risk of being overly trite, I repeat for the thousandth time that I believe the so-called star system and system of "featuring," indulged in with such violent promiscuity in the domestic theater, to be one of the most majestic aids to the success of the moving picture business. Example: The recent starring of Miss Billie Burke in a perverted version of "*The Amazons*."

VI. Mr. William Winter, still regarded in many quarters as an astute dramatic critic, not long ago contrib-

uted to the sum of our critical knowledge as follows:

When, in reminiscent mood, I muse on the brilliant career of Ada Rehan, as known to me, the character of the woman seems even more interesting than the accomplishment of the actress. She was a creature of simplicity and truth—intrinsically sincere, modest and humble. Buoyant glee, a dominant attribute of her acting, was equally characteristic of her conduct in private life, and no stress of care and trouble, from which she has not been exempt, could dash her spirits or deaden her sensibility. She was ever a passionate lover of the beautiful, alike in nature and art, and she could discern and cordially admire the beauty of other women—a happiness not usual with her sex. She was intrinsically guileless and noble, generous and grateful; never forgetting kindness and never speaking ill of anybody. Of all my friends among the players, she is the last of the old order, but when we meet, as sometimes we do, I find her still the same gentle, merry, hopeful, sympathetic creature whom first I knew as a young and ardent girl, with all her life before her.

I cannot persuade myself to look on such writing as dramatic criticism.

VII. I believe that the critical employment of the adjective "sympathetic" (as applied to themes and characters) is both stupid and militant for dramatic buncombe.

VIII. I believe that there never was and that there never will be any clearly defined "cycles" in the theater. The person who speaks of cycles in the theater is the sort of person who believes that an actress of forty-five, if she be a real artiste, can portray to her audiences' satisfaction a girl of twenty.

IX. In a recent and perfectly serious metropolitan newspaper prize contest over the virtues of that synthesis of hyper-bosh called "*The Master Mind*," one of the letters received and published ran as follows:

The *Master Mind* is the most powerful play I have ever witnessed, combining as it does tragedy with pathos. In my opinion the two principal characters are the district attorney and Lucene. The sacrifices each is willing to make are those that would tax the feelings of human beings beyond measure. On the one hand we have the sacrifices of the man, his willingness to give up his wife—all that a man holds dear—his present position in life, and a most brilliant future. And on the other hand we have the sacrifices of the woman, who is willing to give up her husband in order that his future life may be successful. The sacrifice that Lu-

cene is willing to make is very great, when we consider the deceitful and hypocritical game she played to gain her ends.

I am led to believe, therefore, that dramatic criticism must have its uses after all.

X. I am a firm believer in the widely ridiculed practice of casting a play with "types." George Arliss, admirable actor that he is, certainly could not play Bill Sykes; Sarah Bernhardt, excellent actress that she is, cannot satisfy me in the role of "L'Aiglon." The eye is often mightier than the mind. Nature is more powerful than all the art in Christendom.

XI. I believe that the bill prepared several months ago by Lieutenant Governor O'Hara of Illinois, having as one of its clauses a provision that all dramatic critics must be licensed, must pass examinations to prove their fitness, is a worthy bill and should be passed. I believe, however, a second clause should be incorporated in it to include all theatrical managers.

XII. I believe that "The Easiest Way" is the finest of American dramas, "The Poor Little Rich Girl" the most imaginative piece of American dramatic writing, "Baby Mine" the best of American farces—and that William Faversham is the most intelligent actor on the native stage.

XIII. I believe with Ashley Dukes (although Mr. Dukes fails to practise what he preaches) that "tolerance smooths the way of life, but it is the most insidious enemy of art. It spells compromise, and compromise and criticism cannot be on speaking terms."

XIV. I believe, finally, that altogether too much attention is paid the actor on all occasions, and that, on all occasions, it ought to be remembered that the artistic dramatic relation of the actor to the play is in the ratio of one to one thousand. (Loud proletarian cries of, "But a play ain't a play unless it's acted!") George Henry Lewes, copious chronicler of mummer virtues, recalling the playing of "Faust" by a German company at the St. James's Theater, said: "The sudden illness of the tragedian who was to have played Mephistopheles caused the part to be handed

over to a fourth-rate member of the troupe who knew the part; yet, although the performance was a very poor example of the Art, the interest excited by the character was so great that the public and the critics were delighted. It is the incalculable advantage of the actor that he stands in the suffused light of emotion kindled by the author. He speaks the great thoughts of an impassioned mind, and is rewarded, as the bearer of glad tidings is rewarded, though he have had nothing to do with the facts which he narrates."

The amiable Wilde, stepfather to the prosy Chesterton, observed in his essay, "The Critic as Artist":

"Criticism is no more to be judged by any low standard of imitation or resemblance than is the work of poet or sculptor. The critic occupies the same relation to the work of art that he criticizes as the artist does to the visible world of form and color, or the unseen world of passion and of thought. He does not even require for the perfection of his art the finest materials. Anything will serve his purpose. And just as out of the sordid and sentimental amours of the silly wife of a small country doctor in the squalid village of Yonville-l'Abbaye, near Rouen, Gustave Flaubert was able to create a classic, and make a masterpiece of style, so, from subjects of little or of no importance, such as the pictures in this year's Royal Academy, or in any year's Royal Academy for that matter, Mr. Lewis Morris's poems, M. Ohnet's novels, or the plays of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the true critic can, if it be his pleasure so to direct or waste his faculty of contemplation, produce work that will be flawless in beauty and instinct with intellectual subtlety. Why not? Dullness is always an irresistible temptation for brilliancy, and stupidity is the permanent Bestia Trionfante that calls wisdom from its cave. To an artist so creative as the critic, what does subject matter signify? No more and no less than it does to the novelist and the painter. Like them, he can find his motives everywhere. Treatment is the test. . . . Criticism is a creative art. It works with materials, and puts them into

a form that is at once new and delightful. What more can one say of poetry?"

Contrast with this intrinsically sound, if spoofing, appraisal, the pronouncement anent criticism delivered before the National Press Club of Washington during the year by our theatrical purveyor, Mr. Henry W. Savage. Said Henry: "We have a set of critics in New York who write largely, if not entirely, from the point of view of self-exploitation. They are not concerned with the play, with an analysis of the play, with comment on the cast, with a verdict of the public, but are simply concerned in an effort to find a nail on which to hang some sharp saying or some clever impression which shall add to the personal popularity of the column and not to the dignity of the performance."

Dramatic criticism has as much right to "sharp sayings" and to "clever impressions" as drama. The prevalent American hallucination that criticism, to be sound and helpful, must be operose and dull of reading is a child of the same mental process that has borne the idea that the time in which a melody is cast has much to do with its status in the catalogue of "good music" or "bad music"—in other words, that all syncopated music is "cheap" music because it is syncopated. I can imagine nothing more futile and silly than a serious, analytical appraisal of some such Savage presentation as "What Ails You?" or "Somewhere Else"—both of which exhibits Mr. Savage had in mind when he delivered his little sermon. Nor can I conjure up anything more sublimely feeble than a recitation of the "verdict of the public" in the case of eight plays out of ten. (It so happened that the "verdict of the public" in the instances of the above brace of presentations, however distressing to the producer, was neither inartistic nor at odds with professional criticism, however flippant the latter may have been.) Although I have not the pleasure of an acquaintanceship with Mr. Hughes, author of the former presentation, I will lay my last louis that his honest opinion of his own farce was quite as full of unspoken "sharp sayings" and "clever impressions" as the

very critiques which Mr. Savage so loudly berated. It so happens that Mr. Hopwood, creator of the latter presentation, is personally known to me. It is therefore my privilege to inform my readers that Mr. Hopwood subsequently criticized his own work to me even more "sharply" and "cleverly" than I myself had been able to criticize it.

Dramatic criticism—virtuous dramatic criticism, I mean—should know no laws, no by-laws. If, in certain instances, it takes upon itself a rather pantaloonish form, the fault is not with the critic but with the object that is up for him to criticize. It is impossible for any even remotely intelligent critic to be "comic" in the presence of respectable drama. Show me one "smart" critique of "The Easiest Way," of "The Thunderbolt," of "Strife," of "The Poor Little Rich Girl," of "The Pigeon," of "Les Hanneçons," of "Man and Superman"! With such fuzzy worsteds as "Are You A Crook?" "The Conspiracy," "The Model," "Her First Divorce," and the like, there remains little for the even remotely intelligent critic to do but wield a grimacing pen. If plays are meant to be acted, so then, too, is criticism meant to read. The fact that such products as constitute the second named group are not deserving of any sort of criticism compels the critic who, by virtue of his routine demands, must willy-nilly write of them, to write of them in such a fashion that his scrivenings will, at least, be perused. One may write of conscious humor seriously; one may not write of unconscious humor save with the weapon of ridicule. That is, and be read by those who are worth having as readers. Worth having not only by the critic, but indirectly by the playwright, actor and producer as well.

When I originally set myself to the labor of writing this review of a reviewer, I bethought me that it would be a superior idea at this particular juncture to illustrate my point concretely by writing three sample criticisms of a single play; that is, the same critical appraisal, the same intrinsic opinions, written first in a Calvinistically serious vein, second, in the strained "funny" style indulged in

by certain newspaper commentators, and lastly, in a style that would neither infer the world was coming to an end the next morning nor that punnings and making jokes over play titles constitute a ravishing critical literature. Space frowns upon such a pastime, however; although, did it not, I believe I should be able to persuade you to agree on the one hand that what often passes for dignity in criticism is nothing more than a platitudinous writing style and, on the other, that what too often are looked upon as "sharp sayings" and "clever impressions" are *in toto* nothing more than no writing style at all. And I believe I would be able to lead you to deduce finally that, when all is said and done, the best dramatic critic is not alone he who possesses intrinsically sound opinions, but he who possessing them is yet able to present them in such a manner that they will simultaneously entertain and instruct. A criticism, however replete with juicy meat, that still bores the reader accomplishes nothing. A criticism, however equally full of juicy meat, that merely amuses the reader accomplishes nothing. A criticism, to gain the best results, must have all the virtues of a good play. And dramatic criticism is a more difficult craft than playwriting. This is surely the reason why we have more good plays than good critics. For one James Huneker, America boasts a half-dozen or more Eugene Walters, Edward Sheldons, Eleanor Gateses, Winchell Smiths, Marion Fairfaxes and Margaret Mayos. For one Walter Pritchard Eaton, we have a half-dozen young fellows of the same age able to turn out plays that win the public's pesos and plaudits.

Shaw is the greatest playwright living today because Shaw is the greatest dramatic critic living today. Shaw himself admits this. Pierre Veber is one of the worst playwrights living today because Pierre Veber is one of the worst critics living today. Veber himself does not admit this. Who but an accomplished dramatic critic could write a "Fanny's First Play"? In this latter work, did not a critic-dramatist even prove that criticism is in itself drama—or, at least,

the stuff of which good plays may be made? Where, in all the hundreds of plays of the last several seasons, will you find wit to measure blades with that Shavian critical epilogue, too widely called satire when, as a matter of statistics, it is rather a direct transcript, generally speaking, of some of our journalistic dramatic criticism as such criticism is subsequently delivered to the public via the Mergenthaler machines:

GUNN (*interrupting*)

I know what you're going to say, Count. You're going to say that the whole thing seems to you to be quite new and unusual and original. The naval lieutenant is a Frenchman who cracks up the English and runs down the French; the hackneyed old Shaw touch. The characters are second rate middle class, instead of being dukes and millionaires. The heroine gets kicked through the mud—real mud. There's no plot. All the old stage conventions and puppets without the old ingenuity and the old enjoyment. And the feeble air of intellectual pretentiousness kept up all through to persuade you that if the author hasn't written a good play it's because he's too clever to stoop to anything so commonplace. And you three experienced men have sat through all this, and can't tell me who wrote it! Why, the play bears the author's signature in every line.

BANNAL

Who?

GUNN

Granville Barker, of course. Why, Old Gibbey is straight out of the Madras House.

BANNAL

Poor old Barker.

VAUGHAN

Utter nonsense! Can't you see the difference in style? To me it's perfectly plain who wrote that play. To begin with, it's intensely disagreeable. Therefore it's not by Barrie, in spite of the footman who is cribbed from "The Admirable Crichton." He was an earl, you may remember. You notice, too, the author's offensive habit of saying silly things that have no real sense in them when you come to examine them, just to set all the fools in the house giggling. Then what does it all come to? An attempt to expose the supposed hypocrisy of the Puritan middle class in England; people just as good as the author, anyhow. With, of course, the inevitable improper female: the Mrs. Tanqueray, Iris, and so forth. Well, if you can't recognize the author of that, you've mistaken your professions—that's all I have to say.

BANNAL

Why are you so down on Pinero, and what about that touch that Gunn spotted in the Frenchman's long speech? I believe it's Shaw.

Rubbish!

GUNN

VAUGHAN

Rot! You may put that idea out of your head, Bannal. Poor as the play is, there's the note of passion in it. You feel somehow that, beneath all the assumed levity of that poor waif and stray, she really loves Bobby and will be a good wife to him. Now I've repeatedly proved that Shaw is physiologically incapable of the note of passion.

BANNAL

Yes, I know. Intellect without emotion. That's right. I always say that myself. A giant brain, if you shall ask me; but no heart.

GUNN

Oh, shut up, Bannal. This crude medieval psychology of heart and brain, this Shakespeare livers and wits—is really schoolboyish. Surely we've had enough of secondhand Schopenhauer. Even such a played-out old back number as Ibsen would have been ashamed of it. Heart and brain, indeed!

And now, with this paragraph, let us return to a consideration of our original and irritating proposition: Why is George Jean Nathan? Lest the present writer be charged with a clearly defined and undue prejudice in favor of Mr. Nathan and his more or less critical talents, he deems it expedient to intrust the discussion of the problem to other and probably fairer hands. In pursuit of a possible explanation of the buxom mystery, he accordingly submits to the public a number of select letters received by the critic during the past twelvemonth, together with a transcript of a review or two of this reviewer that appeared in the daily journals during the same period of time. First, a letter from a successful and reverend theatrical producer:

MY DEAR MR. NATHAN:

New York has got its full number of bum dramatic critics, that much is sure—but of the whole lot you are absolutely the rottenest that the human race ever gave birth to. I put on a show not long ago; the most popular critics in town give it glowing notices; it draws big houses; everybody who sees the show says the scenery, the acting and the lines are all very clever; and then out you come and say that "while unquestionably the scenery is beautiful and the acting proficient, the play itself is nothing more than a piebald lubrication of unmitigated delight to the theatergoing hinds and analogous ignorami"—whatever all that means. And this show that you roast is drawing ten thousand per, while a show of mine that you praised last year lasted exactly a week! Be-

lieve me, if you think this sort of judgment is dramatic criticism, you are wrong. A great man once said that "he who can, does; he who can't, criticizes." I always keep that motto tacked over my desk, and I think it has had a lot to do with my success as a theatrical manager. I can do things and I do them! And I'll bet you a new hat I make a thousand times more money than you do, anyway.

We next inspect a letter from a leading dramatic critic:

DEAR MR. NATHAN:

I have never had the pleasure of meeting you personally, although I have closely followed your critical writings for six or seven years. That I agree with your conclusions only half of the time, and that I deplore, in so apparently well schooled a craftsman, the youthful tendency which you show to flout such serious things as the technique of playwriting, the established status of some of our most successful playwrights, and the like, will here have nothing to do with the point I want to bring home to you. You were on the highroad toward making a name for yourself as a critic, and then what did you do to spoil the whole thing? You sat down and, to prove your contention that new dramatic ideas are not so difficult of discovery as the vacuous work of so many of our playwrights indicates, you wrote and published right next to your critical article—a *play*! That the little play was a mighty impressive and highly imaginative piece of work I won't deny; but by publishing it you have for once and all and for all future time laid yourself open to attack from the very playwrights with whose labors you have dealt so harshly, although (I grant you) fairly and enlighteningly. A critic should never write or try to write a play. It isn't policy. I think you will understand what I mean. Think it over and I believe you will agree with me that you have made a big mistake.

In the next glass case we peruse a transcript from an article in one of the Chicago daily newspapers:

George Jean Nathan, the SMART SET MAGAZINE's dramatic commentator, who for several years has been seeking to persuade the American public to laugh at serious French drama of the Bernstein-Bataille brand, at serious American drama of the Augustus Thomas-Belasco brand, and at serious British drama of the Houghton-Mason brand, is now hard at it in an athletic endeavor to get the public to believe with him that the public's self-organized numerous clubs and societies for the purpose of uplifting the drama are a benevolent sham and delusion, that the idea is a good one but that the execution is bad. Mr. Nathan will next probably try to convince us that the drama in Hungary is in a better imaginative state than anywhere else.

(Incidentally, it might be of interest to note casually at this juncture that

such Hungarian playwrights as Molnar, Leyngel and Ludwig Biró actually have demonstrated themselves to be possessed of rare imaginations of which the American public and Chicago are only dimly aware.)

Come we now to a review published in St. Louis:

Although we read George Jean Nathan regularly, we still are of the decided opinion that he is a deleterious influence as regards the American theater because, even when his ideas are clearly at odds with unanimous and authentic knowledge, he somehow cunningly persuades his reader to believe as he does. His critical attacks upon such forceful uplifting artists and geniuses of playwriting as Charles Klein and George Broadhurst, for example, are inimical to the best interests of native dramatic art, as are, too, his critical estimates of such superb interpreters of drama as Mrs. Leslie Carter, Mr. Dustin Farnum, Mr. Edmund Breese and so on. It is a matter of the deepest regret that a critic of this sort will deliberately seek to use his writing skill to wean thinking people, against their wills, from their honest, sound and constructive convictions.

A letter from a playwright of reputation:

MY DEAR SIR:

In criticizing my latest play you have had the arrogance to write that I seem to know very little about the subject with which my work treats. And, in the effort to convince your readers that you know what *you* are talking about, you cite any number of ideas bearing upon the theme of my play which I chose to omit, any number of examples and parallels that show how I purloined my ideas from other sources, and a full quota of suggestions as to how I might have infused my play with more original thought than I did. You may be pleased to look upon such work as dramatic criticism. I look upon it, if you wish my opinion, as nothing more than the weak maneuverings of a vain mind. Dramatic criticism should concern itself with the play as that play is written, not as it might have been written.

This from a member of the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States:

MY DEAR SIR:

You are the safest and most consistent critic in the country for a theatergoer to follow. I personally have not missed one of your criticisms in the last five years, and I have found on all occasions that by going to the plays you denounce and remaining away from those you endorse, I have been enabled to enjoy myself completely, intelligently and without reserve.

From an actor, the following:

DEAR SIR:

On two separate occasions you have roasted me to a turn because you say my enunciation,

pronunciation, general deportment and carriage, and conception of certain lines have been "grievously indecent." Let me answer you by assuring you that I am a graduate of a Pittsburgh high school; that, as far as general deportment and carriage goes, my family is in the best society; and that, as far as my reading of the lines in the cases you mention went, the producer himself complimented me after the first performance. Anyway, you have put yourself on record, as saying that physical attractiveness counts a lot in certain phases of our histrionic art, so I suppose you oughtn't to be taken seriously.

Here a clipping from a London daily:

In a recent number of the American Edition of the SMART SET MAGAZINE, Mr. George Jean Nathan, dramatic critic for the publication, launches the following statement:

"Just as it took an Englishman to discover Brieux for Englishmen and Americans, so will it take an American to un-discover Barker for Americans and Englishmen. A man of diversified capabilities this Barker assuredly is; but a dramatist of imposing note and superlatively beneficent influence in the theater, not at all. Owing what fame is his to that small but powerful group of London writers and publicists who, utilizing their full strength, have even succeeded in impressing their fellow countrymen and most Americans that Cicely Hamilton is possessed of an uncommon talent, Granville Barker reveals himself to the discriminating as little more than a worker in Shavian clay, as one who exploits a laborious point of view more mouthy than meaty. Our critics have said of him, in the language of the dubious Ashley Dukes: 'He thrusts at the world with all the brutality of pure intellect, then recoils querulously to make up his mind; the attitude remains undiscovered.' But might not the same thing have been written as far back as 1899 of that vague and poetizing Gaul, François de Curel? Show me, in the later Barker, theme or philosophy which improves upon the text-socialism of 'Les Repas du Lion,' or the aristocracy of 'Les Fossiles'; show me one-quarter of the original philosophical fertility of the mother-child doctrinism of 'L'Invitée,' of the smiling love analysis of 'L'Amour Brodé,' of the conflict between faith and science and faith and reason in 'La Nouvelle Idole' and 'La Fille Sauvage.'"

We shall, accordingly, presently expect Mr. Nathan to declare that, in his opinion, Mr. Arnold Bennett is a lesser dramatist than his erstwhile collaborator, Mr. Edward Knoblauch; that "The Easiest Way" is a better play than its British parent, "Iris"; and that Mr. Barker's "Madras House" is inferior as a work of art to, let us say, Mr. Galsworthy's "Justice"!

And so, after all, one observes that, so far as dramatic criticism is concerned, it is simply a case of you pays your money and you takes your choice.

A COUNTERBLAST TO BUNCOMBE

By H. L. Mencken

IF you do no other serious reading this summer, at least give a glance to Brand Whitlock's little book "ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF LAW IN CITIES" (*Bobbs-Merrill*), a modest duodecimo of ninety-five pages, but with more sound sense in it than you will find in most of the stately quartos and folios on your shelves.

Here, indeed, is that rarest of bibliographical rarities: a book written straightforwardly, simply and clearly, and by a man who knows what he is writing about. In the average book, even in the average good book, no such austere economy of means is visible. Your serious author, generally speaking, puts two-thirds of his trust in the mere sough and thunder of words. He tries to convince you by emptying all the parts of speech upon you; his syllogisms are so magnificently made that it is sometimes half an hour's walk between premise and conclusion. Not so this Mr. Whitlock. He says what he has to say, and then he says no more. But that succinct saying of his is so full of grace and plausibility, and behind it there is so much sound knowledge and hard thinking, that he will convince you, I am sure, while he is entertaining you. And so I recommend his little book to you with assurance, as an unusually palatable and nourishing morsel. You will get joy out of it and you will get ideas out of it.

But what is the burden of Mr. Whitlock's argument? What is he trying to show? In brief, he is trying to show that all the current effort to turn the American people into plaster saints by statute is so much buncombe and piffle. He doesn't believe, for example, in laws which say that any man who plays baseball on Sun-

day is a rogue. He doesn't believe in laws which make it virtuous to drink beer under certain arbitrary conditions and a crime to drink it under certain other arbitrary conditions. He doesn't believe in laws which prescribe how a man may amuse himself in his own house, or in his own club, and how he may not amuse himself. He is against all such snoutish enactments for two reasons: the first being that they invade the common rights of free citizens, and the other being that it is wholly impossible to enforce them. And being against them, he is also against the proposal that all who violate them be clubbed by policemen and cast into jail, and against all the vast horde of rowdy preachers, pornographic vice crusaders and self-anointed archangels who go up and down the land advocating that proposal. He believes that such idle posturers and windjammers do a great deal more harm than good—that the result of all their whoopings is not the enforcement of the law, but the creation of organized and immovable opposition to the law; and in this little book of his he says so. What is more, he proves it.

A sort of revival of Puritanism is now going on in the United States. It has been in progress, in fact, for the past four or five years, and in the whole country there is scarcely a community that has escaped the infection. In every large city, for example, a so-called vice crusade is under way, led by bogus "experts" from the social settlements and supported by a miscellaneous posse of emotional club women, sonorous college professors, prima donna clergymen, bosses of Bible classes and other such assiduous press agents. In many places,

certain willing politicians have joined in, eager to snare the votes of the pious, just as their blood brothers have been converted to prohibition in the dry States. Every one of these crusades results in the appointment of a solemn commission to investigate the social evil, and every one of these commissions, after a session of instructive (and no doubt diverting) examination of brothels, brings in a report recommending that the evil be prohibited absolutely, and that all who object be knocked in the head by the police. A law to that effect is usually found on the books, and so it is officially revived with a great flourish of trumpets. And if it is not there, it is put there at once. But is this law ever actually enforced? Does it really stamp out prostitution? Of course it does not. Such a law is no more enforceable in Christendom than a law prohibiting the moon to rise on Tuesdays and Fridays. It becomes, at best, a feeble and silly joke, and is soon abandoned. It becomes, at worst, a fertile source of blackmail and corruption, a device for demoralizing the police, an agent of the very evil it professes to combat.

It is against such maniacal and dangerous lawmaking that Mr. Whitlock raises his voice, and behind his protest there is the experience and authority of a man who has been mayor of an American city for four terms, and has devoted the best years of his life to the consideration of governmental problems. He is not a theoretical sociologist, manufacturing pious platitudes in the seclusion of a college quadrangle. Nor is he a raging vocalist at bucolic Chautauquas, wooing the yokels with tales of devilry in Babylon, between Judge Ben B. Lindsey and the Swiss bell ringers. Nor is he an eminent specialist in "sexual hygiene," that virtuous naughtiness of the hour. No; he is merely a forthright and practical man, telling what he really knows. He has had the hard job of enforcing the laws in his own city of Toledo. He knows which of them are enforceable and which of them are not enforceable, and here he goes over the whole list, backing up every statement of fact and opinion with a reason why. I commend his little

book to your careful reading. It is one of the bravest, sanest, most convincing public documents ever printed in the United States. In the midst of a great din of bosh and nonsense, of cheap piety and idle wind music, it strikes the clear note of sincerity and truth. I know you will find it interesting, and I think you will find it sound.

And when you have read it, take a look, too, at the fifth and sixth chapters of Walter Lippmann's "A PREFACE TO POLITICS" (*Kennerley*), for there you will find some of Mayor Whitlock's ideas applied to a definite and characteristic piece of moral flapdoodle—to wit, the famous report of the Chicago Vice Commission. This elaborate and highly salacious report made a great sensation when it was first issued, and some Dogberry in the Postoffice Department added to its success by forbidding its transmission through the mails. The result was that the country gulped it down eagerly, and that it set vice commissions in motion in a dozen other cities. No one stopped to examine its recommendations critically, or to inquire into the authenticity of its statistics. But Mr. Lippmann does both—and when he has finished there is little left of the report. It would be difficult, indeed, to imagine a more puerile and ridiculous document. Its logic would do discredit to a first year theological student. And yet, as I have said, it was swallowed with gusto, and all the vice commissions that have reported since have frankly cribbed from it.

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Various earnest messages and calls to arms from moral, political and sociological Iokanaans—the Hon. Robert M. La Follette, the Progressive martyr; the Hon. Stephen Coleridge, the anti-vivisectionist; the Hon. Henry Beech Needham, the tobaccophobe, and others after their kind. The tale that the Hon. Mr. La Follette has to tell in his "PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF POLITICAL EXPERIENCES" (*La Follette Co.*) is one that must wring a pearl of sorrow from the driest duct. He has been the target for years, it seems, of a hellish hierarchy of political prisoners and banditti, and on

scores of occasions they have come close to letting his soul out of his body. The thing began far back in the eighties of the present or Christian era, and has been going on without interruption ever since. The last to try him on a grand scale was the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt—and with more success than most. Theodore did not wield the bludgeon personally, but employed a gang of professional bravos from the gashouse district, including Giff Pinchot, alias Giff the Biff; Medill McCormick, alias the Embalmer, and Gilson Gardner, alias Cyanide of Potassium. These Catilines gave the Hon. Mr. La Follette to understand that they were in favor of him for President of the United States, and so he jumped into his frockcoat and made a tour of the Chautauquas, stirring up the peasantry against Prof. Taft. The peasants were duly inflamed and things had begun to look soft, as the vaudevillians say, for the Hon. Mr. La Follette—when suddenly the loathsome conspirators landed on him with a sandbag, and when he came to his senses again he found that Theodore was running in his place, and that all his eloquence had gone for naught! Well, well, enough to make any man a bit sore! No wonder the Hon. Mr. La Follette is bitter against Theodore! So would you be, dear reader, if he had played you such a trick. But did he actually play it upon the Hon. Mr. La Follette? Alas, there is a conflict of testimony here. The La Follette men say that Bob was deceived; the Roosevelt men say that he ruined himself by his Philadelphia speech, and that the common people bellowed for Theodore. To quote Hannah More:

If the whole conclave of hell can so compromise exadverse and diametrical contradictions as to comopolitise such a multimonstrous maffrey of heteroclitics and quicquidlibets quietly, I trust I may say with all humble reverence they can do more than the Senate of Heaven.

So much for poor Bob and his sanguinary battles for the lowly. All the combats of the Hon. Mr. Coleridge, whose "MEMORIES" (*Lane*) come next, have been fought for the guinea pig. He is the *shamash* and *capo comico* of

the English anti-vivisectionists, and the best years of his life have been devoted to excoriating the doctors. In this pious enterprise he has been greatly helped by the fact that he is a son of the late Lord Coleridge, Chief Justice of England, but it didn't help him much when he was haled into court by a doctor who objected to being excoriated, and a rambunctious jury mulcted him in ten thousand dollars damages. Stephen's book is made up, in the main, of witless and uninteresting anecdotes about old friends of his father—Gladstone, Manning and Jowett among them. For the rest, he devotes himself to proving that all science is evil. What is it, after all, this science? Empty bosh! A curse to man! Ah, for the good old days when the madstone was a sovereign balm for hydrophobia, and whiskey yet cured snakebite, and camomile tea was pumped into the yowling young, and London was six days a-horse from Liverpool, and all Jews and Catholics were disfranchised, and men were hanged for one hundred and fifteen different crimes, and the honest English bathed but once a year, and consumptives enjoyed the sacred right of unlimited expectoration, and doctors were ranked with barbers, and the death rate was sixty per thousand of population per annum. Darn Darwin! To Hades with Huxley! A greater man than either is the Hon. Stephen Coleridge. As he hints himself, he has "retained the old and beautiful ideals of life in a faithless world," he has "kept the essential vulgarity of science out of his life," he has a mind that is "stored with the greatest and best that has been said by the wisest and holiest of all the ages." And yet, as I have remarked, that contumacious jury found against him, and he had to disgorge for fibbing about the doctor. . . . His portrait is his frontispiece. A smug gentleman in a white necktie, smooth of gill and chin, and fast growing bald. A countenance full of conscious rectitude.

The Hon. Mr. Needham's tale of his victory over tobacco, in "DIVORCING LADY NICOTINE" (*Forbes*), will doubtless give joy to those who are engaged in

similar struggles, but I myself am not, and pray devoutly that I never shall be; and so I am but mildly thrilled. Mr. Needham seems convinced that tobacco was fast dragging him down to his grave. It gave him gastritis, insomnia, nightmare, incipient cancer, katzenjammer, dyspepsia, distemper and that tired feeling. No wonder he tried to escape! But hundreds of thousands of us, smoking from reveille to taps, have not got any of these diseases, nor even the dizziness and trembling of the patent medicine advertisements, and so we keep on puffing away, and propose to devote the rest of our lives to the vice. . . . Less moral and more diverting is the story that William Carleton tells in "NEW LEVES FOR OLD" (*Small-Maynard*)—of how he bought a wornout farm in New England, and taught a whole community of decadent yokels the way to get a living out of the soil. Common sense is what won the day for Mr. Carleton. He knew no more about farming than he knew about hagiology, but he was very eager to learn, and he had a cerebellum in his head to learn with—and so he was ahead of the native hinds before the first year was out. Then he began inflaming them with something of his own enthusiasm. The net result was a sort of neighborhood farmers' trust, with direct sales to consumers in the nearby city—and the baffled commission men gnawing their fingernails in despair. The thing is not fiction, but fact. What is more, it is fact that is not singular. The very same thing has been done in other places. . . .

* * *

When Dr. Oscar Levy projected his English translation of the Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, five or six years ago, it is doubtful that there were a dozen students of the mad German, either in England or in the United States, who had much faith that he would be able to carry it through. The difficulties in his way were numerous and serious. He had to make arrangements with the Nietzsche heirs (no easy task in itself) and with the publishers of previous attempts at translation into English; he had to find a publisher brave enough for an enterprise involving nearly eight

thousand pages of letter press; he had to find translators who could do justice to Nietzsche's extraordinarily brilliant style, and were not to be dismayed by his recondite allusiveness; and he had to arouse the interest of a public that had more than once shown its utter apathy, to the confounding of all earlier adventurers. And yet the thing has been done—and with almost dizzy dispatch. Here are the eighteen volumes in a row, excellently translated, intelligently annotated, well printed and properly bound—and for sale at a price which makes them but little more costly than eighteen bad novels. No other foreign philosopher, so far as I know, has ever been done into English so promptly or so completely. T. Bailey Saunders has pegged away diligently at Schopenhauer for years, and won the gratitude of all of us thereby, but his Schopenhauer remains incomplete. So with the English versions of Hegel and Kant. So with Comte: the translation of the "Cours de Philosophie Positive" made by Harriet Martineau is full of gaps, and no one has ever filled them. So, finally, with Descartes. He has been dead one hundred and sixty-three years, and yet one of the English universities is just announcing the "first complete English translation" of his works. But here is a complete Nietzsche already, and Nietzsche has been dead but thirteen years.

And as he has swiftly piled up his books, Dr. Levy has also made his public. At the moment, indeed, there is a veritable Nietzsche boom in England, and all the more serious reviews—the *Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh* and the *New English* among them—have lately printed elaborate articles about the prophet of the superman. In addition, there has appeared a considerable body of Nietzschean literature in more permanent form—such expositions as Dr. Georges Chatterton-Hill's "THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIETZSCHE" (*Ouseley*), such elaborations of Nietzschean themes as Anthony M. Ludovici's "NIETZSCHE AND ART" (*Luce*); and such exercises in the Nietzschean manner as Count Gobineau's "THE RENAISSANCE" (*Heinemann*). Mr. Ludovici's book, the only one of the

three mentioned to be reprinted in America so far, is an amazingly interesting piece of writing, though often he leaves Nietzsche far behind and goes sky-hooting through interstellar dominions of his own. Sound art, he argues, is "the overcoming of chaos and anarchy by adjustment, simplification and transfiguration." This is the so-called classical spirit, or, as Mr. Ludovici chooses to call it, the ruler-spirit. The first-rate artist is moved by the will to power: his overmastering desire is to reduce an unruly and discordant mass of material to order and symmetry, to prove his power by his conquest. Opposed to this ruler-artist is the romanticist, the flabby artist of democracy. The moving impulse of the latter is not the will to power, but the mere will to live. He yields to the disordered fluency of his material; he tries to adapt himself, as it were, to his artistic environment, or, at any rate, he does not seek to oppose it. Starting out from such premises, Mr. Ludovici quickly arrives at the conclusion that romanticism is puny and degrading, and that its pull is against genuine artistic expression. A hard thesis to maintain! Is there anything puny about "Elektra"? Did less virility and "overcoming of chaos" go into "Tristan und Isolde" than into "Don Giovanni"? . . . But, for all that, an entertaining and stimulating book, copious in its presentation of fact and delightfully daring in its thinking.

The exposition of Dr. Chatterton-Hill is painstaking and accurate, but, if the truth must be told, a bit heavy. Nietzsche, I fear, will never lend himself very gracefully to the solemn elucidations of pedagogues. As he himself was fond of saying, he was a philosopher with a hammer, and what is more, a philosopher with something not unlike a slapstick. You must search him long before you find a page without its touch of irony, its gay fling at some scholastic dunce, its elaborate multilingual pun. He is everything that the metaphysician of tradition is not, and by the same token, everything that the punditic commentator is not. Don't think, however, that I call this present learned doctor

wholly stupid! In truth, I do not. He understands Nietzsche thoroughly, and he presents Nietzsche with infinite care. But somehow he contrives to miss much of the spirit of the man, while presenting the letter perfectly. Reading him, you will find out exactly what Nietzsche said, but you will get no notion whatever of how Nietzsche said it.

* * *

When August Strindberg died in his native Stockholm, little more than a year ago, but a scant half-dozen of his plays had been done into English, and his novels and other writings were practically unknown to us, but since then our translators have been working in eight-hour shifts, like coal miners, and the result is already a formidable shelf of books. What is more, there is a feverish and senseless duplication of effort, so that most of the more important Strindberg plays are now to be had in two or three different versions—for example, "The Father," "The Stronger," "The Outlaw," "Pariah" and "Easter." In the case of the sardonic "Fröken Julie," so beloved of ambitious leading ladies, there are no less than four translations on the market, and the rival translators have shown their originality by translating the title in four different ways, not one of which is exactly accurate. Edwin Björkman makes it "Miss Julia," Arthur Swan makes it "Julie," Charles Recht makes it "Countess Julia" and Edith and Warner Oland make it "Countess Julie." My own talent for Swedish, like my talent for the pianoforte, is very slight, but I have employed learned philological counsel at enormous expense, and they all tell me that "Fröken" does not mean Countess, and that, as Strindberg uses it, neither does it mean Miss. True enough, it is now assumed by all unmarried Swedish ladies, even including cook ladies, but its orthodox meaning is "the daughter of a noble," and it was precisely in that sense, no doubt, that Strindberg intended it to be taken, for Julie is a count's daughter, and the fact is insisted upon throughout the play. There are no counts in the English nobility, but the earls correspond to them exactly,

and an earl's wife is still called a countess. Well, what is his daughter called? Is she called Miss Mary, or the Hon. Miss Mary, or Countess Mary? Not at all. She is called *Lady Mary*. . . . I offer the suggestion to future translators of "Fröken Julie": make it "Lady Julie" and have done. And don't change the "Julie" into "Julia"! "Julia" has a virtuous, domestic flavor, in Swedish as well as in English—and this Julie What's-her-name has no more virtue than a congressman. Strindberg called her Julie, indeed, for the very purpose of indicating that she was Frenchy and devilish. Don't try to whitewash her, messieurs!

No less than four non-dramatic works of the terrible Swede are in the current crop—*"THE CONFESSION OF A FOOL"* (Swift), *"THE INFERNO"* (Putnam), *"MARRIED"* (Luce), and *"ZONES OF THE SPIRIT"* (Allen). All save "Married" are autobiographical, and even there the flavor of personal reminiscence is often very marked. The most coherent and interesting of the four is *"The Confession of a Fool,"* an extremely frank account of Strindberg's first marriage, to the Baroness Siri von Essen. The author was an innocent young librarian of twenty-five or twenty-six when he met this charmer, and she was the wife, at the time, of a Swedish army officer, and the mother of two children. She and her husband, who got on badly, seem to have worked a sort of refined badger game upon poor Strindberg. At all events, she gave him a pretty plain invitation, and was not at all shocked when his youthful ardor carried him over Hurdle No. 7. Nor was the Baron's indignation very violent. After a few melodramatic sobs, in fact, he began calm negotiations for a divorce, and when it was granted Strindberg married the lady. Their life together was one darn thing after another. They raged and roared through France, Switzerland and Germany, to the scandal of a score of fourth-rate watering places. The birth of children marked their occasional truces: they acquired, by and by, a family of half a dozen or so. But in the long run, of course, such guerrilla

warfare was bound to end in disaster, and after seventeen years they were divorced. Strindberg was twice married later on, and twice divorced. No wonder he came to view marriage as a combat of wolves!

His account of this first marriage is one long record of quarrels and suspicions. No doubt there was often a substantial basis for them: on one occasion, indeed, the ex-baroness confessed that she had been unfaithful to him during a visit to Finland, her old home. But toward the end he piles up accusations with such prodigality, and they grow so wild and preposterous, that his wife's counter-accusation of insanity begins to take on a considerable plausibility. It is further borne out by *"The Inferno"* and *"Zones of the Spirit,"* which followed *"The Confession of a Fool"* at intervals of ten and twenty years. The first is obviously the day-book of one who has got more than halfway to lunacy. It tells of the author's chemical experiments in Paris, of his efforts to turn the baser metals into gold, of mysterious plots against him by unnamed and incredible enemies. He lives in a squalid garret in the Latin Quarter, supported by the charity of fellow Swedes and suspicious of their very kindness. When he goes upon the streets he reads dark portents in the shop signs, in the handbills on the lamp-posts, in the way passers-by wear their hats, in the remarks of waiters in obscure cafés. Finally he turns to religion as a solace, plowing through the incomprehensible balderdash of his countryman, Emmanuel Swedenborg. In *"Zones of the Spirit,"* ten years later, we find him steeped in pious credulity to the gills. He is ready to believe anything, even Sir William Crookes's reports of his seances with "Katie King"! He denounces the critics of faith as persons who have slipped their trolleys (I report his own figure). He dismisses science and art as so much feeble bosh. One carries away a picture of a man passing slowly into senile dementia, of the final break-up of a mind always a bit unsound, of the pathetic last act of a mental tragedy.

The twenty short stories in "Married" go back to the years 1884-8, before the accumulating bile of the author had quite dethroned his reason, and so they show him at his best. The first of them, "Asra" by name, is the story of two brothers, the one given to the sins of the flesh and the other chemically pure. Mark Twain treated the theme humorously in his twin stories of the good and the bad little boy; here it is treated with all of Strindberg's bitter and magnificent irony. You will go a long way, indeed, before you will find a more cruel fable: it is a devastating counterblast to all the Sunday school books. The same hot acids are to be found in some of the other stories—"Unnatural Selection," "A Natural Obstacle," "Corinna" and "Compulsory Marriage" among them. Not a touch of human kindness relieves the brutal pessimism of these tales. The author hasn't the slightest affection for his characters; he hasn't even any pity for them. His one aim seems to be to strip them to the bone; to make them dance naked to point his sardonic morals. But in certain other of the stories, for all their ruthlessness, a note of sentiment still creeps in. For example, in "Autumn," a study of the transformation which the years work in love, purging it of passion and making it a thing of mutual help and mellow contentment. And again in "A Doll's House," a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the bumptious feminism which Strindberg saw, perhaps falsely, in Ibsen's play of the same name. But these are exceptions. The general tone of the collection is that of furious misogyny. The author fancied that he had suffered much from women, and here he sought to get his revenge. Good reading for ribald and defiant old bachelors—and even better reading, I suppose, for young lovers.

But not, when all is said and done, a work of genius, nor even, perhaps, the work of a genius. I begin to fear, indeed, that some of the early estimates of Strindberg will have to be revised before long, and radically at that. I myself had the honor of being one of his first

whoopers-up in this fair land; I wrote about him at great length so long ago as the year 1901, quoting Ibsen's saying that "here is one who will go further than I." But was this discreet and pondered praise, or merely a sort of emotional taking fire? I incline more and more to the fire theory. Very little of Strindberg was then to be had in English—and perceived through the muddy German veil, he took on colors that really didn't belong to him. The defects of his style were concealed; his gross and frequent blunders in construction were overlooked; ignorance conveniently took no account of his vapid essay in spiritism and theology, the general looseness and absurdity of his more serious thinking. A re-examination of him strips off most of his gauds. He left us one dramatic masterpiece—"The Father"—and half a dozen extremely clever plays—"Lady Julie," "The Stronger," "The Link," "The Dream Play," and the two parts of "The Dance of Death." But he also left a lot of very shallow and silly stuff—for example, "Lucky Pehr" and "Easter"—and in his non-dramatic writings he left us far more of it. "The Inferno" and "Zones of the Spirit" (properly, "The Blue Book") are one-fifth sense and four-fifths nonsense, and such books as "The Confession of a Fool" are interesting only when they are insane. There remain his short stories, of which some of the best are in "Married." Are they short stories of the first rank? Are they comparable to "Youth" and "Heart of Darkness," to "The Attack on the Mill" and "The Blue Hotel"? To be sure they are not. The best thing in them is the courage of their cynicism; the author must be remembered for the hearty way in which he roared his objurgations. But there is no profundity of thinking in them; they do not impress us with any sense of their eternal verity; they are not great human documents.

The trouble with Strindberg, in brief, was that he was a second-rate artist. Over and over again he spoiled a good idea by treating it clumsily and superficially. Half of the stories in "Mar-

ried" do not belong to literature at all, but merely to journalism. They suggest a busy man writing against space, with no time for that careful weighing and polishing of materials which is two-thirds of art. And many of the plays leave the same impression. They are written buoyantly, but they are not written very skillfully. There, indeed, is Strindberg in a nutshell. He was a man of striking originality and unbounded courage, and always magnificently in earnest, most of all in his lunacies. But he was without the critical faculty. He lacked a feeling for form. He was not an artist of the first caliber.

* * *

In the few novels that have come to me since our last meeting I have found little worth reporting at length. Henry Sydnor Harrison's "*V. V.'s EYES*" (*Houghton-Mifflin*) is a magnificent exercise in sentimentality, and so it is getting extravagant encomiums from the lady reviewers, but I cannot recommend it as a great work of art. Specifically, it deals with the spiritual rebirth of Miss Carlisle Heth, daughter of an opulent Richmond cheroot manufacturer. When we first meet Cally she is a butterfly of the butterflies, and her one genuine aim in life is to snare Mr. Hugo Canning, a millionaire society man. If she thinks of young Dr. V. Vivian at all, it is with loathing, for he has dared to denounce her father's cheroot works as unsanitary and her father as a potential murderer of his working folk. But in the course of some four hundred pages the spell of V. V.'s noble altruism works a great change in her, and she learns to love him. And then, just at the moment of regeneration, the Heth cheroot factory comes tumbling down, carrying poor V. V. with it, and Cally finds herself a widow before she is a wife. . . . There is considerable distinction in Mr. Harrison's style, a rare quality in this land of rubber stamp novelists, and he has a sharp eye for the little humors of charac-

ter; but to me, at least, there seems to be little poignancy in his pathos, and so I have been wearied by his long, long story.

W. B. Trites is another much praised fictioneer whose charm I have failed to grasp. He was "discovered," as the saying is, by William Dean Howells, and has been the recipient of copious newspaper notice. But all I can find in his "*JOHN CAVE*" is the somewhat florid story of a bibulous but otherwise highly untypical newspaper man. This gentleman begins his career before us by frequenting joss houses and opium joints and accepting money from a prostitute, but after a while he marries a rich girl, pulls himself together and becomes chief editor of a moribund daily paper. In the end, however, he goes back to drink, and as we leave him he is lying in the mud by the side of a lake, too weak to jump in and die. Disdaining detail, Mr. Trites covers a lot of ground in a short time, and so his story gives the effect of rapid and nervous action, but there is nothing very profound in it, and certainly nothing very artistic. Upton Sinclair, in "*SYLVIA*" (*Winston*), tells the story of a Southern belle who marries a Harvard millionaire, only to find, in M. Brieux's familiar phrase, that he is damaged goods. It is the best piece of writing that Sinclair has ever done, but certain gross faults in construction do it much damage. The pictures of Southern social customs and Southern folk are excellently vivid and accurate.

The rest of the novels are trade goods. For example, "*WALLINGFORD IN HIS PRIME*," by George Randolph Chester (*Bobbs-Merrill*), another chapter in the gaily sinister career of J. Rufus. For example, "*IN ANOTHER MOMENT*," by Charles Belmont Davis (*Bobbs-Merrill*), a sentimental tale of Broadway and the stage. Foreexample, "*THE UPPER CRUST*," by Charles Sherman (*Bobbs-Merrill*), a labored comic romance with a hero named Algernon Van Rensselaer Todd. For example—but enough for August!





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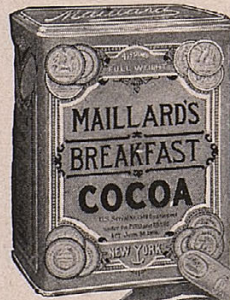


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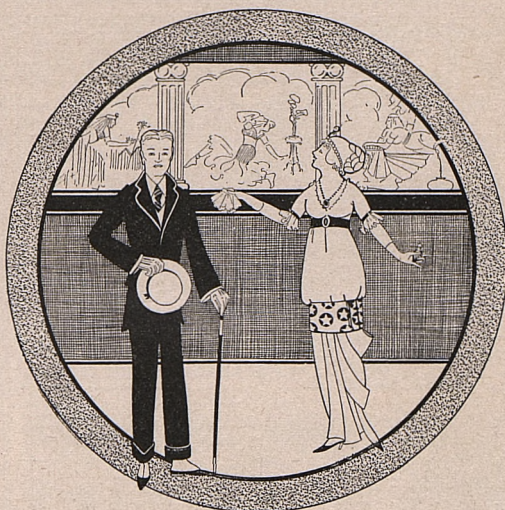
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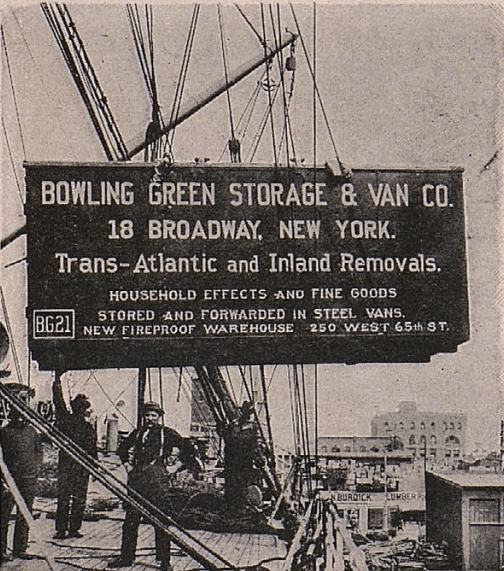
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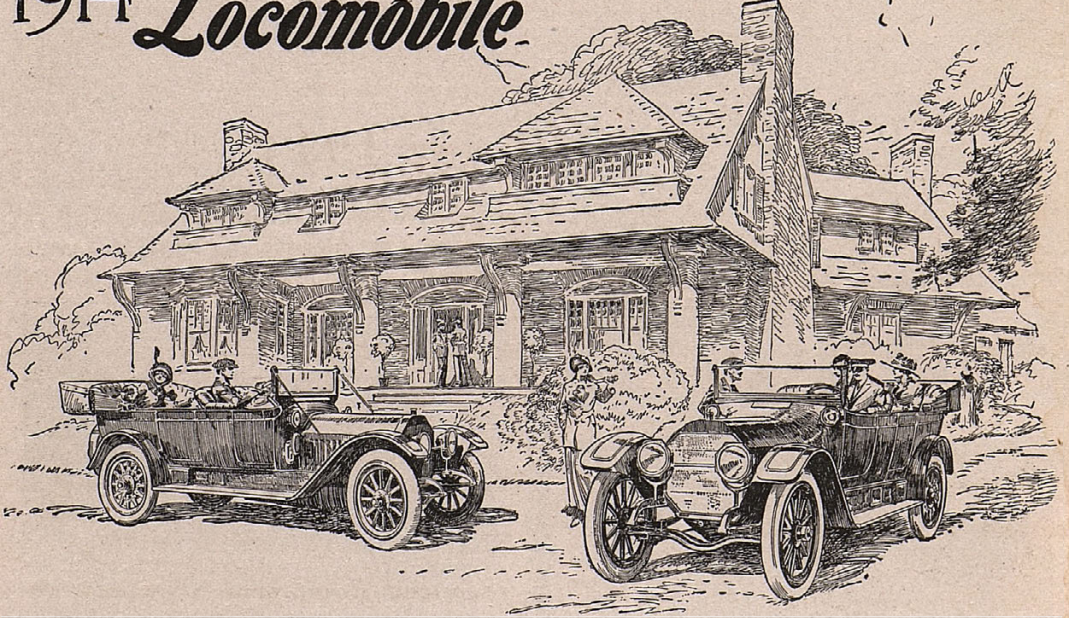
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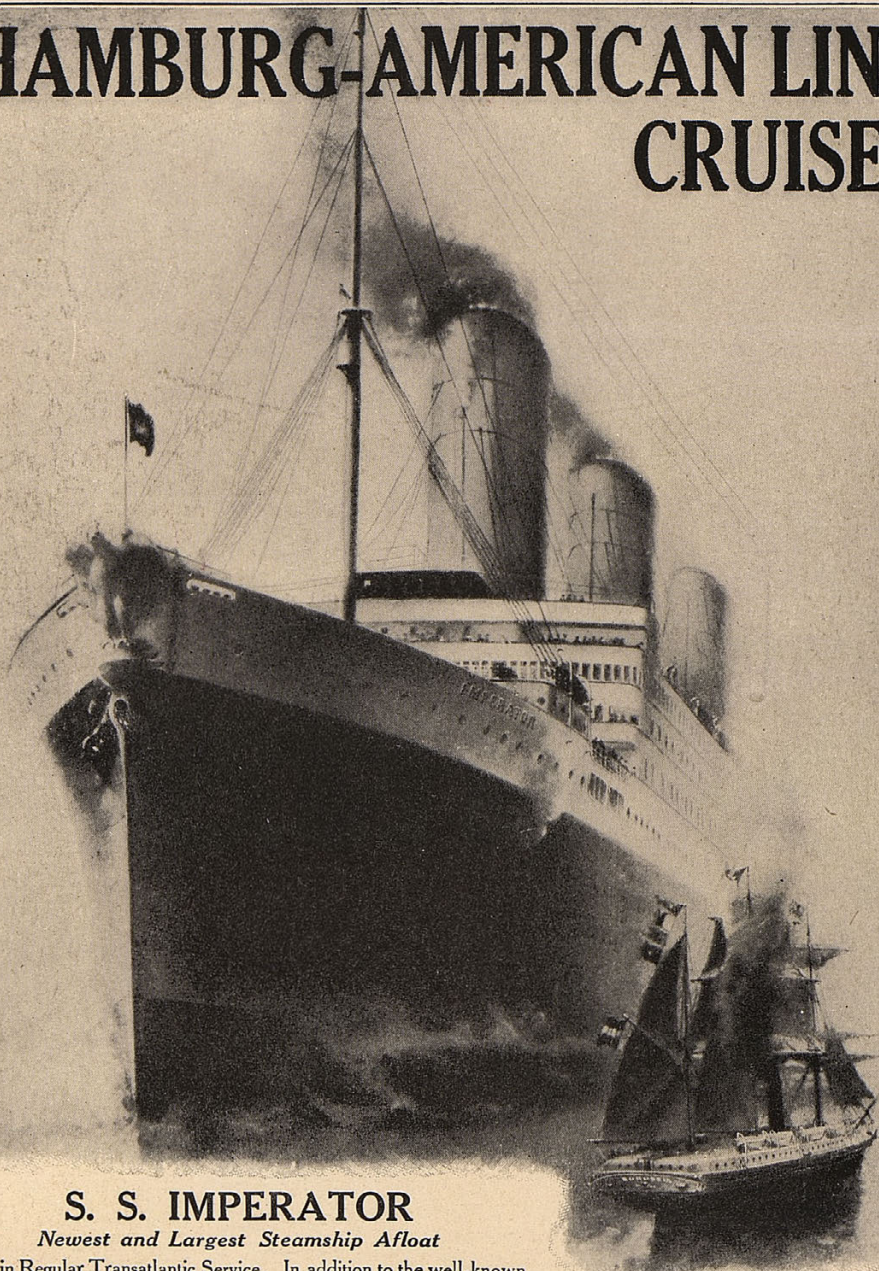
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